FAUZAN SALEH

Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in Twentieth Century Indonesia

A critical Survey

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A Critical Survey

BY

FAUZAN SALEH

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The system of Arabic transliteration used in this work follows that of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. Indonesian terms are written according to the *Ejaan Baru Bahasa Indonesia* (1972), except personal names and titles of books or articles, which are rendered according to the original spellings (see below). Likewise, all Arabic words that have been adopted into Indonesian will be written according to Indonesian spelling, without indicating their Arabic diacritical signs, such as Muhammadiyah, instead of *Muḥammadīyah*; Majlis Tarjih, instead of *Majlis al-Tarjīḥ*, and al-Irsyad instead of *al-Irshād*.

However, the *tā' marbūṭah* (ة) is transliterated as *"ah"* form, and *"at"* in conjunction form; such as *al-ʿibādah* and *al-ḥanīfiyat al-samḥah*. Indonesian words indicating personal names or titles of books and articles that originate from the works before the 1972 Indonesian spelling system will be retained as they are. The main difference between the old and new Indonesian spelling systems can be seen as listed below:

Old Spelling		*New Spelling*	
ch	(Churafat)	kh	(Khurafat)
dj	(Madjlis)	j	(Majlis)
j	(Jajasan)	y	(Yayasan)
nj	(-nja)	ny	(-nya)
sj	(Masjumi)	sy	(Masyumi)
tj	(Ketjil)	c	(Kecil)

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F.S.

SMTV
SUARA

PREFACE

During the first quarter of the twentieth century a new scholar about to begin the study of Islam in Indonesia would have been introduced to three fundamental characteristics of the Muslim experience in that country. The first would have been that animism pervaded the thinking of most Indonesians and was a force so dominate that all formal religions operating within the region had to adapt themselves to it, whether consciously or unconsciously. It was claimed that Buddhism did that earlier and Islam, which followed, had accommodated itself as well. Consequently, much of what Muslims believed at that time was colored or mixed with the taint of animistic belief and the rites and ceremonies of believers were partial to those practiced by animists, particularly those dealing with death, graves and saint worship. The second characteristic that would have been mentioned was the closed village life of the Indonesian region with its heavy identification with custom, a social force so strong it appeared to many Dutch scholar-administrators as an oral law regulating the inhabitants of the several closed communities existing then. Based on the practices of generations, the social mores were seen as accepting and rejecting influences coming from outside and, in the sorting, deciding to what degree any outside influence would be accepted and the conditions upon which it would be accommodated. Hinduism and Buddhism had both done this earlier and Islam too was accepted in different places upon the conditions laid upon it. Hence Islamic doctrine and behavior was accepted differently in Aceh than it was in the Minangkabau area and what it was on the island of Java. The third characteristic dealt with the nature of Islam itself, which was viewed as strongly under the impact of mystical influences, even more than was common in other parts of the Islamic world of the time, and that the standard tenets of Islamic thinking and practice were suppressed for expression of Islam made through the formulations of the great Sufi movements of the day: the Naqshabandiyah, the Shattariya and the Qadiriya. The conclusion given to the new scholar would have been that Islam in Indonesia was a very hybrid system that did not much resemble the purer strains found in the Middle East and was even different from that of nearby South Asia. Muslims of the Indonesian region would have been labeled generally

as "incomplete," "nominal," and "ignorant of the real teachings of the faith," and any cases of piety and general adherence to the formal standards of Islam common to the historical tradition of the faith would have been regarded as the exception.

Scholarship in the early 21st Century would find this description of the early 20th Century as somewhat overdrawn, noting that the pockets of standard Islamic living existing throughout the society did not fit with the explanations of animism, custom law and sufism that dominated the thinking of the earlier scholarship. But even if the earlier scholars did not get it totally right, there is little doubt that the main themes were accurate in the main, and did accurately describe an Islamic community that was not very knowledgeable about the great tradition of Islam or very observant of standard Islamic behavior, practices and ritual. It was a very rudimentary Islamic community that was in existence at that time.

A new scholar at the turn of the 21st Century undertaking a study of Islam in Indonesia would be introduced to a far different situation than his colleague 75 years earlier. In large part the Indonesian world was transformed by the political independence movement of the second quarter of the century and by the Westernization of the economy that marked the last half of the century; consequently, most of the primal beliefs and the social system were either transformed or swept away for the creation of a new, heavily nationalistic society. Again three characteristics might be put forward to describe the contemporary Islamic community. The first would be that the Islamic community of Indonesia is in the midst of a long-term religious revival in which the standard behavior, rites and rituals of Islam have become common coin and which are so strong as to even demand the participation of those in society under the influence of other social influences that might normally lead to conflict with Islam, such as secularism, Western-style education and non-Islamic organizations. A series of reformist and intensification movements throughout the last century have been the vehicles for this attention, although certainly the reasons for success have much more to do with the basic changes in society already mentioned. The second characteristic would be the persistence of Islamic organizations, such as the Muhammadiyah, the Nahdlatul Ulama and others, that have given long-term direction and substance to the Islamic religion itself and, although there have been somewhat different views of Islamic doctrine and history expressed by different organizations, there have been enough

agreement that the Islamic community has experienced a common development of identity. The third characteristic has been the appearance of a mature intellectual community that is investigating the nature of modern Islamic society, the preferred terms of political development and the role of religion in confronting the contemporary problems of the time. That movement, noted in large part by a broadness of view, has not yet succumbed to fundamentalism or a narrowness of interest that have so marked many other intellectual movements in the Islamic world throughout history. The new scholar would be drawn to the conclusion that there is a vital Muslim community in Indonesia that is no longer ignorant of the great tradition of the religion or unfamiliar with the standards of belief, practice and ritual. It would be further concluded that this community has considerable promise and that, while hardly monopolizing the national political scene, is an important feature of a dynamic society. This is a telling contrast with the earlier assessment and shows powerful forces of transformation at work.

So, with this contrast, we come to the current study, which tells us how the earlier world at the beginning of the 20th Century was actually transformed into the conditions of the early 21st Century, which are so markedly different. The study centers importantly on the question of Indonesian Muslim scholarship and tracks the important steps that took place in intellectual thought throughout the century and the consequent development of doctrines, principles and practical formulations necessary to transform Indonesian thought into the modern idiom. The study itself is fascinating and revealing about the nature of Islam, about the nature of change, and about Indonesia in a key historical period. It is a story worth telling and, fortunately for the reader of this book, it is told well.

The author, Fauzan Saleh, is in a particularly good position to tell us that story. He is a teaching staff member in the State Islamic Studies system of Indonesia, a series of higher education colleges located throughout Indonesia with the mission of training officials for the Ministry of Religion and for filling other positions in society that need a background in Islamics. He himself has a strong background in Islamic training within the religious educational system of Indonesia, which was topped off with two study tours at the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University, where he completed his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. As a strong believer in Islam, his identity with that religious tradition is never in doubt, but as a scholar trained in

Western methodology, he is adept at pulling forth the material that describes the key points of the intellectual movements of the twentieth century and analyzing them in a manner that builds to solid conclusions and considerable insight. The blend, so reminiscent of the new Islamic scholarship followed by a wide number of contemporary Muslim thinkers of Indonesia, gives the reader special perspective into the strengths of the new scholarship since the study is actually a part of it. Fauzan Saleh shows us, by example, some of the strengths of scholarship now existing in that intellectual community.

This study is important in many respects. First, it combines the strengths of two intellectual traditions, that of Islam with it exacting standards of examining and preserving knowledge, and that of the West with its methods of investigation and analysis. Second, it examines a subject that is ripe for study; sufficient preliminary studies exist that the subject can be examined with enough countervailing opinions and analyses of the parts that an overall verdict becomes inevitable and worthwhile. Finally, and perhaps, most importantly, the study is being done by a Muslim Indonesian, indicating the long distance that has been traveled in the scholarly community from the days when only a foreigner could look at the condition of Indonesian Muslims and draw conclusions that would be respected by knowledgeable observers.

Howard M. Federspiel

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Inquiry

Geographically, Indonesia is the Muslim country situated the farthest away from the cradle of Islam, the Middle East. This geographical factor is often deemed a crucial one, and is regarded as responsible, at least in part, for the delayed process of Islamization in the country. In other respects, Islam came to Indonesia at a time when it was no longer experiencing a high degree of political and cultural achievements but was in general decline. As a consequence, Muslims were unable to assert vigor that would permit its influence to transform indigenous beliefs and traditions into a strongly Islamic construct. Islam was not a powerful current when it first began to penetrate into Indonesia. According to one scholar, "the penetration of Islam was more assimilative than revolutionary… Islam came to Java on the heels not of conquest but of trade."[1] It had inevitably to accommodate itself to many elements of local customs and to tolerate traditions alien to its genuine character. Islam was then considered to be only "a thin veneer of symbols attached to a solid core of animistic and/or Hindu-Buddhist meaning."[2]

Indonesian Islam, in comparison with Islam in other parts of the Muslim world, appears above all to be less Arabized. For this reason it is often seen as having only a "peripheral" position among other Muslim nations. In this sense, it is like other nations throughout Southeast Asia, where Islamization has been a gradual process, in the course of which older religious beliefs and forms have been slowly changed without necessarily disappearing. But, as will be described later, while this older form of belief resisted the process of Islamization, a "purer" version of Islam did, nevertheless, steadily penetrate into parts of the region, often leading to more or less pronounced cleavages between old and new.[3]

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[1] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 68.

[2] Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), p. 82.

[3] Harry J. Benda, John A. Larkin and Sydney L. Mayer, Jr., *The World of Southeast*

It is in line with the above ideas that Indonesianists differ in terms of their perceptions of Indonesian Islam. Some maintain a skeptical perspective, emphasizing the point that Islam has had no significant influence on the shaping of Indonesian culture. Others, however, adopt a more assertive point of view, maintaining that indeed the presence of Islam in Indonesia has transformed a great deal of its cultural constructs. Federspiel, for instance, upholding this emphatic point of view, affirms that over the past four hundred years, Islam in Indonesia has slowly been moving towards a more orthodox form of religion, while its heterodox beliefs and practices have declined over the same period of time.[4] In the same vein, Harry J. Benda also suggests that the Islamic history of Indonesia is essentially the history of *santri* cultural expansion and its impact on Indonesian religious life and politics.[5] However, not all the regions of Indonesia have experienced this transformation to the same extent. Indeed it was only in the areas least influenced by Hindu-Buddhist civilization in the past centuries—such as Acheh, West Sumatra, Banten and Macassar—that Islam assumed a significant role in community affairs, and profoundly affected the religious, social and political consciousness of its adherents. In these regions, the new faith has manifested itself in a purer, less conciliatory and even at times, an aggressive form. On the other hand, throughout most of Java, Islam was forced to adapt itself to centuries-old traditions—partly indigenous, partly Hindu-Buddhist—and in the process, lost much of its doctrinal strength.[6] Under such circumstances, it is not surprising to find that many who professed Islam in Java were for the most part only nominally Muslims, and that they retained popular customs (*adat*) to a great degree.

The emergence of the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam movements in 1912 and 1923, respectively, representing the Islamic reformist trend in the early twentieth century, constituted, in fact, a response to the perceived need to purify Islam from the "corrupting" local influences of popular customs.[7] The Islamic religious reforms

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Asia: Selected Historical Readings (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 304.

[4] Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1970), p. 3

[5] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1958), p. 14.

[6] Ibid., p. 12.

[7] Clifford Geertz, in his classic work *The Religion of Java* (1960), uses the dichotomy between modernity and tradition to characterize religious variety in the Indonesian

advocated by these movements encompassed several aspects of life, individual as well as social. However, the primary concern voiced by the reformists was with certain theological issues which were essential to the whole movement. This is evident in some of the main issues that led to the establishment of the Muhammadiyah in 1912, such as the impurity of religious life, the inefficiency of religious education, the activities of Christian missionaries, and the indifferent and even anti-religious attitude of the Indonesian intelligentsia.[8] Hence, the purpose for which the Muhammadiyah was initially founded was to purify Indonesian Islam from corrupting local influences and practices, and to reformulate Islamic doctrines in the light of modern thought.[9] Persatuan Islam, on the other hand, was founded in order to establish the faith even more on the basis of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, and to accelerate the propagation of Islam.[10]

The reformists' attempt to reintroduce purer Islamic doctrines also to a great extent signifies their concern to promote orthodox belief and practice. Orthodoxy, as will be discussed further later, is a trend found within all the major religious traditions. For both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam, this orthodoxy could only be achieved through direct reference to the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, to which other, secondary sources, such as the works of the (medieval) '*ulamā'*, had to defer. The reliance on these secondary sources in religious affairs—in some cases even to the exclusion of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah—was allegedly a characteristic of the traditionalist

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Muslim community. For him, the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam are accordingly classified as modernists, while the more conservative groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) and Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) are categorized as traditionalists. The modernist, according to Geertz, is associated with a "scripturalist" religious orientation and with a concern for rationality, economic development and Western education. Traditional Islam, on the other hand, is described as mystical, more syncretic, rural and otherworldly oriented. Yet, since this dichotomy of modernist-traditionalist is based on Geertz's ethnographic research in the 1950s, the great changes that have taken place since then must be taken into consideration, making it increasingly difficult to maintain the validity of this model. See Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glenco, Illinois: Free Press, 1960), p. 56-89; Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Muʿtazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), p. 141. Here I will use the words "reformist" and "modernist" interchangeably to indicate both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam and similar movements associated with modernity.

[8] Abdul Mukti Ali, "The Muhammadijah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction." (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1958), p. 21.

[9] Ibid., p. 50.

[10] Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 15.

groups, represented by the Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) and the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) as well as others. This is not to suggest that the latter are in any way heterodox, for indeed both sides—the reformists and the traditionalists—saw themselves (and continue to do so) as the defenders of orthodox beliefs and practices, though they retain their own respective interpretations of what it means to be orthodox.

It is important to note here that, as upholders of orthodox beliefs and practices, in Indonesian terms, both the modernists and traditionalists are called *santris*, which essentially means devoted and obedient Muslims. They strictly adhere to God's directives, such as obligatory daily prayers, fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, and payment of religious tax (*al-zakāh*). Therefore, especially in Java, they may be contrasted with the syncretists who are less concerned with some of the more formal aspects of Islam than they are with attaining a specific state of mind.[11] In general, therefore, *santri* Muslims are characterized as those who are highly motivated to strive to become true and perfect Muslims.[12]

However, scholars are not in full agreement when it comes to deciding which group should be termed "orthodox." Benda, for instance, uses the word orthodox to describe the traditionalists rather than the reformists.[13] Likewise, B.J. Boland, in his work *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (1982), is also inclined to use the term "orthodoxy" to identify the traditionalists.[14] By contrast, Federspiel considers the Muhammadiyah to belong to the orthodox camp. Its orthodoxy, according to his analysis, is manifested in its stress on maintaining the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), proper behavior (*akhlāq*), and the correct performance of ritual obligations (*fiqh*).[15] In another work, Federspiel also discusses how the Persatuan Islam makes ideological claims to orthodoxy exceeding that of the NU. Persatuan Islam claims to belong to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah and, it is argued,

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[11] Sven Cederroth, *Survival and Profit in Rural Java: The Case of an East Javanese Village* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995), p. 230.

[12] Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), p. 150.

[13] Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, pp. 48 ff.

[14] B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 4.

[15] Howard M. Federspiel, "The Muhammadijah: A Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia." *Indonesia*, no. 10 (1970), p. 57.

always struggles against *bid'ah* in religious matters, while confirming correct religious doctrine and behavior.[16] An assessment to attribute orthodoxy to these reform movements is also provided by Bambang Pranowo in his "Islam and Party Politics in Rural Java" (1994).[17] Based on these initial points, there appears to be ample evidence that it would be of great interest to examine further how orthodoxy is discussed by both the modernists and the traditionalists and how each justifies itself as the upholder of correct doctrines and orthodoxy.

Purifying religious belief and practice has been an essential tenet of the reformist group, in addition to *ijtihād*, or rational interpretation by individuals of the text of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic traditions, or Ḥadīth. The reformists' insistence on the necessity of *ijtihād* is to some extent meant to counter *taqlīd*, or the blind acceptance of the words of one or more *'ulamā'* without critical consideration, a practice often laid at the doorstep of the traditionalists. The purification of religious practice is therefore a necessary expression of safeguarding orthodox belief against all elements of non-Islamic mysticism, magic, animism, and Hindu-Buddhism that had been erroneously incorporated into Islam. The same process is also designed to uncover the original, pure and true Islam. This is because both in ancient and contemporary times the faith is seen as being eternal, and it is only with purified faith that the believer is able to rationalize much of the modern world.[18]

Since theological purification has long been the reformists' main concern, it is incumbent to discuss how they developed their theological discourse, especially during the formative period. This entails

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[16] Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 163; idem, "The Muhammadijah," pp. 62-63. See also his article, "The Political and Social Language of Indonesian Muslims: The Case of *al-Muslimun*," *Indonesia*, no. 38 (October 1984), pp. 55-73. *Al-Muslimun* is the most important organ of the Persatuan Islam, published in Bangil, East Java, since 1954. In his article on this topic, Federspiel suggests that the orthodox stance manifested by the Persatuan Islam can be seen in their attempt to be closely associated with Islamic values generally found in Middle Eastern Islam. Among these values are: enunciation of Islamic principles; the use of Arabic expressions, names and scriptural quotations to support their position in response to the current issues; and an attempt to insert Islamic principles into everyday life as their proper concern. See ibid., p. 72.

[17] See Bambang Pranowo, "Islam and Party Politics in Rural Java," *Studia Islamika*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1994), p. 6; idem, "Partai Politik dan Islamisasi di Pedesaan Jawa," in Saiful Muzani (ed.), *Pembangunan dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1993), p. 181.

[18] James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 18.

examining the challenges they encountered from local customs alien to "pristine" Islam, and what they identified as the orthodox religious beliefs and practices to be adopted by Muslims instead of syncretic and corrupted ones. Several works by the early leaders of both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam are of great use in terms of clarifying their early theological positions. Chief among the Muhammadiyah sources is the work of K.H. Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik* (1949), in addition to the doctrinal guidelines prescribed by the Muhammadiyah headquarters in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*. The works of Haji 'Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (1956) and Djarnawi Hadikusuma's *Muhammadijah Ahlus Sunnah wal-Djama'ah?* (n.d.), reprinted as *Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Bid'ah, Khurafat* (1996), and idem, *Kitab Tauhid* (1987) as well as other contemporary writers among Muhammadiyah scholars offer some understanding of how this reform movement has developed its theological discourse.

Persatuan Islam itself, on the other hand, has made strenuous efforts to defend the true meaning of *tawḥīd* against heresy, superstition and innovation (*bid'ah, khurāfāt, takhayyul*). Ahmad Hassan (d. 1958), the most distinguished figure in the group as well as its most prolific author, wrote a treatise devoted to this issue, entitled *Kitab al-Tauhied* (1937). But his writings on theological doctrines are not confined only to this book; they are spread throughout several other works of his, such as *Sual-Djawab* and *Pengajaran Shalat*.[19] Although these latter treatises are primarily concerned with legal issues and ritual practices, nonetheless significant portions of them is devoted to matters of belief, such as prayers not immediately directed to God but through the intermediacy of the saints (*tawassul*), belief in superstition and sorcery, the questions posed by angels in the tomb,

[19] The *Sual-Djawab* or "Questions and Answers" is a collection of *fatwās* which had previously appeared in periodicals brought out by the Persatuan Islam, such as *Pembela Islam*, *al-Fatwaa* and *al-Lisan*. Although there were other contributors to this collection of *fatwās*, A. Hassan was the predominant author of its contents. Comprised of fifteen volumes, *Sual-Djawab* was published in Bandung and Bangil, the two main centers of the movement, during the periods 1931-1940 and 1956-1958. *Pengajaran Shalat* first appeared in 1348 A.H. (1929), and was reprinted in 1991 by Pustaka Tamaam, Bangil. This work, although mainly devoted to providing practical guidelines of performing Islamic prayers based on the Qur'ānic texts and Ḥadīth, provides a special discussion of Islamic principal beliefs, including the belief in *qaḍā'* and *qadar* or predestination.

reward and punishment, as well as problems of predestination (*qaḍā'* and *qadar*).

The above exposition gives us a general idea of the early formation of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. However, more serious progress on this matter did not really take place until the 1970s. The issues discussed at that point in time did not extend beyond the classical paradigm of the Ashʿarite school of *kalām* or, in more general terms, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. Both the reformists and the traditionalists are strongly attached to this school of theology.[20]

The first real progress notable in such discussions took place with Harun Nasution's accepting a position as lecturer at the IAIN Jakarta in 1969. He brought with him a broader approach to academic cultural life after completing his studies at McGill University (1962-1968). Up until then, the IAIN's academic staff had been heavily oriented toward the University of al-Azhar in Cairo and had maintained an exclusive attachment to the Shāfiʿite school of law. This orientation was largely believed responsible for the narrow-mindedness of the IAIN's alumni, for their shunning of rational thinking and for their disinclination to discuss temporal issues.[21]

Perhaps the most significant contribution of Harun Nasution lay in his endeavor to establish the foundations of the intellectual tradition in the IAINs; one that might provide the means for students to speak out and even to inquire critically into established doctrines. As far as theology was concerned, Nasution made another breakthrough by facilitating a new approach in the study of rational and dialectical theology. He began his enterprise by undertaking a comprehensive re-examination of the classical Islamic schools of theology, especially the Ashʿarite, Maturidite and the Muʿtazilite. His work on this issue, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-aliran, Sejarah, Analisa dan Perbandingan* (Islamic Theology: Schools, History, Analysis and Comparison, 1972), has been widely influential.

Although some may disagree with Nasution's renewal program, especially with his inclination toward Muʿtazilism, nevertheless he championed intellectual progress among Indonesian Muslims. His breakthrough in this cultural domain allowed the present generation

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[20] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason*, p. 146.

[21] See H. Aqib Suminto in his introductory remarks to *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Panitia Penerbitan Buku dan Seminar 70 Tahun Harun Nasution and Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), pp. ix-xi.

to broaden its religious outlook. Despite the fact that not all contemporary Muslim intellectuals are directly indebted to his thought, Nasution retains a position of prominence by virtue of having established the cultural foundations for the ongoing progress of Indonesian Islam. On the other hand, outside Nasution's circle, several other figures and groups of Muslim intellectuals have voiced similar concerns over the issues faced by the Muslim community in Indonesia. One of the most significant of these is Nurcholish Madjid and his followers. Like their modernist predecessors, Madjid and his group are also interested in revitalizing *ijtihād* by introducing the ideals of modernity, but they insist that these must be based on the principal Islamic traditions. Greg Barton has characterized this new movement as representing "a genuine attempt to combine progressive liberal ideals with deep religious faith."[22]

Madjid and his group, better known collectively as the upholders of the "Renewal of Religious Thought in Islam," or *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran dalam Islam*, are among the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals who are increasingly concerned with the question of the proper role of Islam in national development and with how Islamic values should be reconciled with a Western brand of nationalism. They are less interested in the idea of founding an Islamic state than were their modernist predecessors in the 1950s. Classical religious questions in theology and jurisprudence remain a focus of their inquiry, but these are not their central concern. Their movement, which some describe as Indonesian Neo-Modernism, is essentially religious in nature and is primarily motivated by their concern for the progressive development of Islam and its community in the Indonesian context. They maintain that the focus of Islamic theological discourse should shift from merely disputing ritual performance to searching for Islamic solutions to social, economic and political problems.[23]

B. Aims and Scope

In general, this study will examine the development of Indonesian Muslims' thinking on issues of theology as an integral continuum of development from the early period of the reform movement up to the

[22] Greg Barton, "Neo-Modernism: A Vital Synthesis of Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1995), p. 7.
[23] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason*, p. 146.

end of the millenium. More specifically, it will focus on theological thought developed by reformist writers belonging to the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam. The theological discourse developed by both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam may be seen as a nascent systematic attempt to draw up the essential beliefs of Islam in the Indonesian historical and cultural contexts, but one that was rigorously directed toward orthodoxy. Their endeavor to reintroduce pristine Islam, albeit through different approaches and emphases, was taken over by the generation of the 1970s, which constituted a transitional phase in Indonesian Muslim history. This was mainly represented by Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid, whose works lent a more academic flavor to the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. As far as the question of orthodoxy is concerned, this work will also attempt to reevaluate both Federspiel's and Boland's theses quoted at the beginning of this introduction.

Besides the main sources referred to above in discussing the Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam and Harun Nasution, the works of Nurcholish Madjid will also be taken into consideration.[24] As an author, he has been more prolific lately, especially after the establishment of his Paramadina Foundation in 1986, an institution devoted to the advancement of Islamic learning within the upper-class milieu of Jakarta. It is nevertheless true that Madjid is not alone, and that he is not the only scholar who reflects these current intellectual developments. There are many other thinkers emerging alongside of him who share a similar perception of contemporary Indonesian Muslim issues. Many of them received their intellectual training in Western universities as well. M. Amien Rais, Kuntowijoyo, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, and Jalaluddin Rahmat, just to mention a few examples, are among the present-day scholars who, though trained in different fields and disciplines, are nevertheless greatly concerned with Islamic social, economic, political and religious issues, as reflected in their respective works.

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[24] The most important works of Nurcholish Madjid, and ones which have a direct bearing on the subject matter of our discussion, include: *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan dan Kemodernan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992); *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan: Membangun Tradisi dan Visi Baru Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995); *Islam Agama Peradaban: Membangun Makna dan Relevansi Doktrin Islam dalam Sejarah* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995); and *Dialog Keterbukaan: Artikulasi dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998).

C. The Development of Theological Thought and the Scholarly Study of Indonesian Islam

So far, there has been no work devoted solely to this subject matter as a whole. Of course there are some works that in one way or another have raised a number of relevant issues. However, these works do not address the overall development of Islamic theological thought in Indonesia during this century. The theological issues discussed in such works constitute only one aspect of their authors' exposition of certain religious organizations, movements, and the ideas of some scholars. Achmad Jainuri, for instance, in his thesis entitled "The Formation of the Muhammadiyah's Ideology 1912-1942" (1997), tries to offer a new outlook on this movement's theological doctrine as an expedient that functions to encourage social responsibility. However, he puts it in a sociological context and inevitably confines himself to the Muhammadiyah, while leaving no room for a broader perspective on the general development of theological thought in the country. Federspiel, on the other hand, in his *Persatuan Islam* (1970), elaborates the theological debates current among Indonesian *'ulamā'* in the 1950s, but restricts himself to Persatuan Islam's point of view. The work of Thoha Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar (1908-1961)" (1996), reviews how Moenawar Chalil, who was himself a distinguished member of both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam, attempted to purify Islamic tenets. Hamim emphasizes Chalil's puritan stance on matters of *'aqīdah* and *'ibādah*. Hamim's work, therefore, makes an important scholarly contribution to theological discourse in Indonesia, but still falls short of being a comprehensive study.

Another attempt to describe part of this theological development has recently been offered by Richard C. Martin and others in their work *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (1997). Unlike the works of Jainuri, Federspiel and Hamim, this book sheds new light on the most recent developments in Islamic theological discourse throughout the Muslim world as well as in Indonesia, where Nasution's influence is acknowledged. In its Indonesian context, this work tries to examine how Mu'tazilite doctrines and rational theology hold particular implications for modernity in the continuing revelation-reason debate. As an important work intended to reflect on the more recent theological developments within Indonesian Islam, this book warrants special attention. Yet,

though an important work in itself, the book fails to give any consideration to the earlier development of theological issues constructed by Indonesian Muslim scholars.

Another important work is Nakamura's *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree* (1983). Nakamura's main concern therein is to examine the local historical process of Islamization in the small town of Kotagede, Yogyakarta. Through this anthropological work he tries to prove that the Islamization of Indonesia is still in progress, not only in the sense that Islam is still spreading among pagan tribes, but also that people who went over to Islam centuries ago are living more according to the standard of Muslim orthodoxy. In other words, Nakamura's work is also meant to verify that an increasingly large number of individuals in the *abangan* category are still moving into the category of *santri*, and becoming more orthodox in their thought and practices as Muslims. Nakamura, therefore, offers a very important exposition of *santri* cultural expansion, an issue which underlies the main theme of this study. However, Nakamura's examination focuses more on the external manifestations of religious life, while paying less consideration to the doctrinal aspects which are very substantial in any belief system. The work is also confined to the particular Muslim community, i.e., that of Kotagede, and is in a sense valid only for that region.[25]

D. Description of the Contents

This book will consist of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. After explaining the general plan of this work in the introduction, a short description of the chief characteristics of Indonesian Islam prior to the emergence of the reform movements in the early decades of the twentieth century will be provided in chapter one. It is clear that, before surveying the idea of progress in Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia, we must first of all be aware of the prevailing circumstances of Indonesian Islam before the reform ideas were introduced. This knowledge base will also be very instrumental with

[25] Other works having similar approach and concern to that of Nakamura—though they do not necessarily come to a similar conclusion—may include Sven Cederroth, *Survival and Profit in Rural Java: The Case of an East Javanese Village* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995), and Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

regard to examining how older traditions influenced Islam at the time, and why it was that the reform movement sought to "return" Islam to its purer form. Following this exposition, in chapter two, I will discuss how Indonesian Muslim scholars tried to redefine Islamic orthodoxy in the Indonesian context. However, in reconsidering what is orthodox and what is not, we have first to examine how classical Muslim scholars dealt with the question of orthodoxy in the Islamic context, and how they prescribed the orthodox beliefs and practices that every true Muslim must follow. This examination will help us understand better how the reformist-traditionalist debate over the nature of Islamic orthodoxy came to last for so long, and even brought the two sides into serious dispute as noted earlier. Both the reformists and the traditionalists are basically orthodox in belief and practice, but they retain their different interpretations of what constitutes orthodoxy.

In chapter three, I will discuss how the Indonesian Islamic reform movements, particularly the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam, attempted to reconstruct their theological discourse by promoting "purified beliefs" as the central theme in their theological works. Their special concern with promoting a more genuine theological system may be regarded as an attempt to sustain orthodoxy. Nor was this special concern a characteristic of the movements only at their initial stage; on the contrary, it continues to be stressed by their modern-day representatives. It is interesting, therefore, to see how this attempt to uphold more refined theological beliefs is introduced into a recent context, for example, that pronounced by a modern Western-trained scholar, M. Amien Rais, who was once a chairman of the Muhammadiyah organization.

In chapter four, I will discuss the current developments in Islamic theology in Indonesia by reconsidering the works of Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid, two of the most influential figures in the shaping of the contemporary Islamic discourse. The discussion in this chapter will be directed to the most recent phase of development, beginning from the mid-1980s, when Indonesian Muslims set out to play a greater role in their country's bid for cultural and economic progress. The mid-1980s also witnessed a great change in the relationship between Muslims and the state bureaucracy. A rapprochement between the two sides is in effect, and it has resulted in circumstances more conducive to the spread of the *santri* culture, the very essence of Indonesian Islamic orthodoxy. To a great extent, this reciprocal

understanding and rapprochement might never have materialized unless Muslims were willing to improve upon their own theological misconceptions in favor of perceiving the ideas of progress and modernity—an arduous task that Nasution and Madjid took upon themselves for its accomplishment. Finally, as a conclusion to this survey of Muslim reformist attempts to sustain orthodoxy, I will discuss how Indonesian Muslims today have manifested their religious commitment as an expression of their growing orthodox beliefs.

E. Note on Approach

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in his famous work *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (1963), insists that the study of religion is highly complex and varied, and thus cannot be reduced to a conceptual abstraction in the mind of the researcher. Smith also emphasizes that, as in other aspects of human life, religion is also in constant flux, in the sense that it is subject to historical progress, or is evolving and always in process.[26] In line with this argumentation, one may agree with Fazlur Rahman's insistence that Islam has changed over time and will continue to change at an even more rapid pace. The transformation of "little" traditions in relation to "greater" ones can be characterized as the "orthodoxification" of the tradition, and, on the other hand, the modernization of the great tradition.[27]

Yet, since this study deals ultimately with theology, it is necessary to reconsider how theology functions when approaching the study of religion. Theology, as defined by Yves Congar, is a discourse through which believers develop and express the content of their faith as they have confessed it. To this end, theologians use the resources of the culture and focus on the questions occupying minds at a given time. The theologians' starting point is the witness given to God's revelation of the divine plan and mystery in the Holy Scripture, tradition, and the current life of the faithful. Thus theologians strive

[26] See W. Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 2-3; Clive Erricker, "Phenomenological Approaches," in Peter Connolly (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), p. 90.

[27] See Fazlur Rahman, "Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: A Review Essay," in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), p. 202.

to lay out, explain and communicate the rich and complex contents found in this witness.[28] In the case of Islam, this idea means that Muslims have to be able to give correct responses in their actions and thoughts to the *āyāt* or 'signs' provided by the Qur'ān and other evidences of God's will. Muslims, therefore, have to draw the right conclusion from these *āyāt* based on valid reasoning, not only for the sake of worldly happiness and social order but also for that of eternal bliss,[29] the results of which are apparent in the formulation of their theological thought.

In addition to the above considerations respecting theology, the present study of modern trends in Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia will follow two main approaches, namely, the historical and the ideational. The historical approach is chiefly instrumental in discussing the development of Indonesian Islam prior to the advance of the reform movement. Through this approach, too, I try to trace more clearly the role played by special factors or events that have directed the flow of theological thought into particular forms as recorded in the works of scholars. This, in turn, also allows me to present some of the issues that engendered the founding of the Islamic reform movement in early twentieth century Indonesia.

In applying an ideational approach,[30] I propose to select some relevant works of Indonesian Muslim scholars on Islamic theology and analyze them. In choosing these works, however, I will confine myself to those written by the modernists, whose concern with the purity of belief and practice dominates their ideas. Of course, it is by no means true that purity of belief and practice is the interest only of the modernists, since the traditionalists also claim always to

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[28] See Yves Congar, "Christian Theology." *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 14, p. 460.

[29] Jacques Waardenburg, "Islamic Studies and the History of Religions," in J. Waardenburg (ed.), *Scholarly Approaches to Religion, Interreligious Perceptions and Islam* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 444.

[30] Ideation means "the capacity of mind to form or entertain ideas," and thus it deals with "the process of entertaining and relating ideas." *Ideational*, therefore, signifies "consisting of, or referring to ideas or thought of objects not immediately present to the sense." See *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* (1981); *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (1993). As an approach, *ideational* is employed by Victor E. Makari in his *Ibn Taymīyah's Ethics: The Social Factor* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983). To this extent, such an approach seems to be commonly used by scholars in examining particular ideas of certain figures. It can be seen, for instance, in the works of Charles C. Adams (1968) and Nikki R. Keddie (1972), on Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, respectively.

have maintained pure belief and practice. Even so, such a claim is not clearly expressed in their writings. Since our aim in this study is chiefly to examine how modernist Muslim thinkers have attempted to sustain Islamic orthodoxy in the Indonesian context, it is therefore necessary to investigate some of the other theories on how to apply Islamic doctrine more consistently, given the current cultural and political realities of Indonesia.

CHAPTER ONE

ISLAM IN INDONESIA PRIOR TO THE ADVANCE OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

A. General Considerations

Islam first became known to the Indonesian people around the thirteenth century, or even earlier.[1] However, Islam did not spread in all parts of the region to the same extent. At first, Islam seemed to flourish more extensively in areas least effected by Hindu-Buddhist civilization, such as in Acheh, Banten, West Sumatra, Macassar, and other coastal principalities where the indigenous people had more access to cosmopolitan culture, thanks to the flourishing international trade at the era.[2] In these regions Islam assumed a significant role in community affairs, and profoundly affected the religious, social

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[1] It is almost impossible to ascertain when Islam really came to Indonesia for the first time. Historians also differ in their conclusions as to how Islam came to the region. The problem is mainly due to the absence of adequate documentation. "When the document was absent," Ricklefs says, "speculation has sometimes been the scholars' only source." However, Muslim traders had apparently been present in some parts of Indonesia for several centuries before Islam was established within the local communities. The earliest document regarded as reliable evidence for the spread of Islam was a Muslim gravestone found at Leran, East Java, dated A.H. 475 (A.D. 1082). This fact does not mean that the Muslim community was only present at that spot. "A few gravestones or travelers' accounts can only provide evidence about the presence of indigenous Muslims in a certain place at a certain time. The fact that no evidence of Islamization happens to have survived from other places does not necessarily mean that there were no Muslims there…." M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia c. 1300 to the Present* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1981), p. 6. For further discussion on the coming of Islam to Indonesia, see, among the others, W.J. Drewes, "New Lights on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?" in Ahmad Ibrahim et al. (eds.), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1985), pp. 7-19; M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization in Java," in Nehemia Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), pp. 100-128; C.C. Berg, "The Islamisation of Java," in *Studia Islamica*, vol. 1 (1953), pp. 111-142.

[2] For further discussion on the Indonesian trade of the period, see J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1967), esp. chs. 3 and 4 (pp. 89-144); B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies: Selected Writings* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1966), Part One, esp. pp. 7-36; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 2 vols.

and political consciousness of its new adherents. Moreover, this new faith also manifested itself in a purer, less conciliatory and at times even an aggressive form than in the greater part of Java, where the Hindu-Buddhist tradition was very influential. There, Islam was forced to adapt itself to centuries-old traditions, and in the process was to lose much of its doctrinal rigidity.[3] Under such circumstances it is not surprising to find that many who claimed to be Muslims were for the most part only nominally so, and that they retained *adat* or popular customs to a large degree.

Indeed, according to C.C. Berg, Java has never been wholeheartedly converted to Islam, although it has been Islamized for a considerably long time. Therefore, it is even meaningless to look for people who sincerely converted to Islam. In keeping with its pattern of culture, Berg argues, Java has absorbed elements of Islam in the course of centuries, in the same way as it absorbed elements of Hindu-Buddhism before, and some elements of European civilization later.[4] From a more general perspective, although almost every Javanese individual claimed to be a Muslim, many of them did not strictly follow the principal tenets of Islam, or the so-called *rukun* Islam. For instance, it was very common that despite their confession of faith, they did not perform the five daily prayers, did not attend the weekly Friday service, did not observe the strong Muslim taboo against eating pork and drinking wine, nor did many have the desire to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca.[5] The pattern of life described above in general terms was an attribute of the *abangan* group, who held to a syncretistic Islam mixed with Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous animistic belief. Peacock has more clearly described this pattern as follows:

> Abangan Muslims may have taken the oath, but they fulfill none of the other five pillars. They do not practice the five prayers, do not fast during Ramadan, eat pork (with apparent enjoyment), pay no tax, and have no desire to make pilgrimage to Mecca. What is worse, from the standpoint of the devout, they dilute the pillars so as to render them flaccid and weak. Abangan mystics have broached the idea that one can do the five prayers simply by thinking about doing them, and that an

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[3] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Raising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), p. 12.

[4] C.C. Berg, "The Islamisation of Java," p. 137.

[5] Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 317.

> acceptable way of making the pilgrimage is merely to take a vacation trip to any place that offers peace of heart.[6]

It is by no means true that Javanese Muslims were less concerned with religion. Koentjaraningrat explains that, in fact, the Javanese generally spent much time in religious activities. They firmly believed in God, in Muḥammad's prophecy, and in the existence of paradise and hell. They also considered the Qur'ān as their sacred book, and at least once in their life each of them pronounced the Muslim formula of confession or *shahādah*.[7] In spite of upholding such beliefs, the Javanese Muslims did not refrain from advocating many religious concepts alien to other Muslims from outside their cultural domain. They believed in supernatural beings, performed many religious ceremonies not prescribed by the "official" religious doctrines of Islam, and were more inclined to mystical Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. It is due to such a type of Islam that this new faith could have spread throughout Java virtually without opposition from the elite. It is highly probable that they supported the spread of Islam notwithstanding the fact that they did not refrain from their old beliefs. For the Javanese, adopting several beliefs at the same time was not uncommon. They had been able to embrace various Hindu and Buddhist cults apparently without a sense of conflict. Therefore it is not surprising to find in the fourteenth century some members of the Javanese elite who

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[6] James L. Peacock, *Indonesia: An Anthropological Perspective* (Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear, 1973, p. 27. See also note 46.

[7] The *Shahādah* is the Islamic profession of faith, declared at least once during one's life, particularly when a new convert initially embraces Islam. The formula says, "I witness that there is no God but Allah, and I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This confession of faith is the rock bottom of Islam, for anyone who holds it is a Muslim by definition. For the devout Muslims, however, this pronouncement is repeated time and again, especially when they perform their daily prayers, since the *shahādah* becomes a part of their prayers. For those who are Muslims by birth, especially for male Muslims, the pronouncement is explicitly made at the time a boy is circumcized, usually at the age of ten or earlier. That is because circumcision is meant as the ceremony of reception into Islam, and is widely regarded as an important part of the Muslim identity. For the *Shahādah* see, D. Gimaret, "Shahādah" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 9, p. 201; Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 122. For circumcision, see A. J. Wensinck, "Khitān" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 5, pp.20-22. See also, T. O. Beidelman, "Circumcision" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 3, pp.511-514. An interesting discussion of circumcision in the early Islamic tradition is provided by Abdulkader Tayob, *Islam: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), especially pp. 45-49. For circumcision in the Javanese ceremonial system, see Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, pp. 359-361; James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 62-65.

claimed to have blended their Islamic belief with that of Hinduism and Buddhism at the same time. It was widely believed that adopting several beliefs, as was claimed, might have helped them gain more sources of supernatural energy,[8] which was recognized as a proper attitude among the Javanese.

Geertz, as quoted by Koentjaraningrat, also suggests that the inclination toward mystical Hindu-Buddhist belief has developed into a peculiar variant of Islam called *Agami Jawi*, the Religion of Java.[9] This development, as Geertz further argues, was due to the fact that since at least the second half of the sixteenth century Islam in Java was cut off from the centers of orthodoxy in Mecca and Cairo, and thus "vegetated another meandering tropical growth on an already overcrowded religious landscape."[10] When Pajang—a Muslim

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[8] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization of Java," p.104. This idea seems to be in line with the one upheld by Zoetmulder in his *The Cultural Background of Indonesian Politics* (Columbia, South Carolina: The Institute of International Studies, the University of South Carolina, 1967). In this regard, Zoetmulder states: "Java and Javanese underwent a tremendous impact of foreign ideas, of culture, of religious concepts, etc., but they were not swept away by them. They moulded them in their own way. They made from the foreign cultural infusions something that was not there before, but still had its very own Javanese character… [In this case] stress must lie on Javanism and there are very important elements in it that remained essentially the same." See ibid., p. 16.

[9] An extensive examination on this peculiar variant of *Agami Jawi* has been made by Koentjaraningrat in his *Javanese Culture*, pp. 316-445. Following Clifford Geertz, Koentjaraningrat first of all emphasizes the distinction between *Agami Jawi* and *Agami Islam Santri* which represent the two major manifestations of Javanese Islam. While *Agami Jawi* demonstrates "an extensive complex of mystically inclined Hindu-Buddhistic beliefs and concepts, syncretically integrated in an Islamic frame of reference," *Agami Islam Santri* represents the other side. The latter, according to Koentjaraningrat, although not totally free from animistic and Hindu-Buddhistic elements, "is much closer to the formal dogma learnings of Islam." (pp. 317-318). Based on this distinction, Koentjaraningrat discusses further the belief systems held by both *Agami Jawi* and the *Agami Islam Santri.* His elaborate examination of the *Agami Jawi* belief system covers a number of concepts, such as belief in God, in Muhammad's prophecy, and in saints; the concept of creation, cosmogony and cosmology, of eschatology, etc. In addition, there is also a detailed discussion of the *Agami Jawi* ceremonial system. All of these present a comprehensive illustration of the syncretic Islam practiced by the Javanese. For another interesting discussion on Javanese ceremonial system dealing with the *rites de passage*, see Marbangun Hardjowirogo, *Adat Istiadat Jawa Sedari Seseorang Masih dalam Kandungan hingga Sesudah Ia Tiada Lagi* (Bandung: Patma, 1980). Although the Javanese *rites de passage* as discussed in this work involve many elements of superstitions (*gugon tuhon, takhayul*), and many people began to undermine them, many others still believe in and practice them.

[10] Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 125; Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, 319. However, Koentjaraningrat disagrees with Geertz's description of Javanese

oriented principality of central Java and an heir of Demak—was defeated by the newly emerging kingdom of Mataram in southern interior of Java, it had had too little time to establish itself as a defender of Islam.[11] Therefore, the people did not have enough time to learn their new faith intensively, nor was Islam able to have a great impact in shaping Javanese civilization and tradition. However, because Muslim power had dominated coastal areas of northern Java and the outer islands since a few decades earlier, Mataram had to pay lip service to Islam, especially in order to maintain diplomatic relations. Subsequently, Islam was able to penetrate Javanese culture but only through the means of reducing its doctrinal rigidity and thus only paying lip service to some of its foundational creeds and practices. By the defeat of Pajang, the spread of Islam in the southern interior of Java was temporarily postponed. This state of affairs provided a chance for the Javanese authorities to preserve the essential elements of traditional Hindu-Buddhist civilization.

Since then, Islam in Java has been forced to adapt itself to concepts

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Islam. He says that it is misleading to assume that Islam meandered seemingly uncontrolled. Unfortunately, Koentjaraningrat does not elaborate his argument clearly enough in rejecting Geertz's idea, except that he emphasizes that during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Islam remained an alien religion in the Javanese interior. Koentjaraningrat's argument against Geertz's idea, besides being found in the above-mentioned work, is also discussed in his article, "Javanese Terms for God and Supernatural Beings and the Idea of Power," in Ahmad Ibrahim et al. (eds.), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, pp. 286-287.

[11] For further discussion on the early Islamic states in Java, see Theodore G. Th. Pgeaud and H.J. de Graaf, *Islamic States in Java 1500-1700* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976). The most prominent ruler of Demak was Sultan Tranggana, who reigned c. 1504-1546. His reign covered a period of important changes in the archipelago. It was during his reign that the last Shivaitic-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit was defeated, in 1527. [Both Pigeaud and de Graaf consider the fall of Majapahit in 1478—as presented in the Javanese traditions—as unreliable]. By the fall of Majapahit, Tranggana was accepted as a Muslim sovereign over Java and the surrounding areas, succeeding the Majapahit king. He and the other Muslim rulers of Demak were patrons of the growing community of religious men and pious traders centering around the mosque. Tranggana died in 1546, in his military expedition to the far-off east Java. He was succeeded by Sunan Prawata, who was murdered in 1549 by Arya Penangsang of Jipang. The latter, who had aspired to be king, was also murdered in revenge by a relative of Prawata, Jaka Tingkir. Jaka Tingkir, being a ruler of the Pajang principality, then ascended to the throne and became the principal heir of Sultan Tranggana. As a sultan he assumed the name of Adi Wijaya. His long reign in the second half of the sixteenth century was important for the shifting of the royal authority from the coastal provinces to the interior of the country. Pajang was also the first center of Islamic cultural activity in the interior, and was responsible for introducing the Javanese literature and arts previously cultivated in the coastal regions.

of Hinduism and Buddhism, which had been predominant in the area. Zoetmulder, for instance, in his study of Javanese pantheism and monism, reveals that even the *pondok pesantrens* which should have served as the basis for orthodoxy were heavily influenced by attempts to preserve this Javanese culture, most noticeably in their literature. These literary products were the result of an extensive effort by their compilers to integrate Muslim doctrines, law and literary tradition with Hindu-Buddhist theological concepts of creation, death and afterlife, and man's relation to God.[12] This is in line with Ricklefs' idea that Javanese Islam in the seventeenth century was almost certainly mystical in its theological content, a natural consequence of the previous dominance of mystical religion in Java. Although most Javanese at the time were Islamized, it was only an idiosyncratic Islam which flourished, with a heavy emphasis on metaphysical speculation of a kind not greatly different from that found in the pre-Islamic periods.[13]

Besides being cut off from its sources of orthodoxy resulting in a peculiar variant distinct from that found in the rest of the Muslim world, Javanese Islam did not experience any renewal movement. The inclination of Javanese Islam toward syncretism was natural, because there was no significant input from other Muslim countries which was authoritative enough to exert a decisive influence on the Javanese mainland. The encroachment into the region of European traders, who at the time dominated the international trade previously held by the Muslims, also intensified Javanese Muslim isolation from the rest of the Muslim world. Although many Javanese Muslims had undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca before the eighteenth century, they did not bring home with them many ideas for change in their religious life. According to Ricklefs, such pilgrims saw themselves as receivers of magical and supernatural power acquired in the Holy Land which could be used advantageously in Indonesia. This is quite understandable since at that time, the Arab land itself—prior to the emergence of Wahhābī movement—was not much interested in the source of Islamic orthodoxy,[14] but was interested as well in religio-magical teachings and mystical power.

[12] For a comprehensive examination of Javanese pantheism and monism that influenced Islam, see P.J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature: Islamic and Indian Mysticism in an Indonesian Setting*, edited and translated from the Dutch by M.C. Ricklefs (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995).

[13] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization in Java," p. 110.

[14] Ibid., p. 109. Hurgronje in his *Islam di Hindia Belanda* also discusses the develop-

Islam in Java at that time was forced to accommodate itself to the Javanese religious heritage, especially through the works of Mataram court scholars. Apparently the Javanese past was important culturally and the Mataram rulers, while announcing their Islamic identity still claimed to have had a direct line of continuity with the Majapahit kingdom of the East Java, which, of course, was Buddhist in religion and culture. In the long run, this policy reinstated traditional Javanese learning and state rituals. With this policy, a religious synthesis that simply incorporated Islam as a new frame for the earlier traditional religious system was gradually developed by the Mataram court scholars. This was made into something like a state religion, though not distinct from formal Islam. The practice of Islam at the court, accordingly, became deeply intertwined with much earlier, pre-Islamic rituals as a part of the new synthesis.[15] Consequently, according to Ricklefs, Javanese Muslims in their philosophical roots were more Hindu-Buddhist than anything else. Such an accommodation produced only a quasi-religious tradition which became dominant in Java and, to a greater extent, remains so in the present. Especially among the Javanese court-circles, the pre-Islamic cultural heritage retained its great vitality. Within this court-circle, Muslim works were studied along with the pre-Islamic classics; the Prophet Muḥammad was honored, but not to a higher extent than the Southern Ocean Goddess, Nyi Roro Kidul, or Ratu Kidul.[16]

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ment of Sufi orders in Medina of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among the Sufi orders flourishing at that time was Shattariyah which had many followers, some of whom were the Indonesian pilgrims from Malay and Java. Shattariyah itself, according to Hurgronje, was not heretical. But in its spreading progress in Java and Sumatra a number of heretical beliefs and popular superstitions were incorporated into its teachings. See *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, p. 48. See also, Ahmad Haris, "Innovation and Tradition in Islam: A Study on Bid'ah as an Interpretation of the Religion in the Indonesian Experience" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1998), pp. 60-64. Haris mentions Hamzah Fansuri among those who studied at Mecca and Medina from Indonesia. He, together with his disciple Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani, was known as the one responsible for disseminating the unorthodox school of *wujūdīyah* mysticism, called Martabat Tujuh or the Seven Grades, in the seventeenth century Aceh. For further discussion on *Martabat Tujuh* or Seven Grades as a doctrine of emanation derived from the existentialist monism of Ibn al-ʿArabī, see P.J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature*, especially pp. 97-114.

[15] Robert R. Jay, *Religion and Politics in Rural Central Java* (New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asian Studies, 1963), p. 9.

[16] M.C. Ricklefs, *Modern Javanese Historical Tradition: A Study of an Original Kartasura Chronicle and Related Materials* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1978), p. 12.

Mataram did not remain quiescent with the penetration of Islam from the northern coastal areas. Either for economic, political or cultural reasons Mataram considered as its adversaries those coastal principalities which were more deeply Islamized than they had been. In an attempt to maintain its supremacy, especially under its greatest king, Sultan Agung (reigned 1613-1646), Mataram sought to subjugate the coastal regions and then the entirety of Java under its hegemony. Benda suggests that this attempt to establish hegemony resulted in the expulsion of the modern, dynamic and aggressive Muslim settlements from the trading centers of Northern Java. It also reduced mercantile activities, and subsequently turned Mataram itself into an isolated, inland, agrarian state. With respect to religion, these changes forced Javanese Islam "to operate in a narrower space within the framework of traditional religious beliefs." Although the process of Islamization among the peasantry was greatly accelerated, the Islam of Java remained stagnant and less pure than elsewhere in Indonesia.[17]

B. The Attitude toward "Pure" Islamic Religious Belief and Practice

The foregoing discussion was intended to provide a substantial description of how Islam was accepted by the Javanese in the seventeenth century. At the same time, it also furnishes a foundation for understanding the current expressions of Islam in Java. Since Islam was compelled to accommodate itself to the Javanese religious heritage, and thus developed only in the form of a quasi-Islamic religious tradition, it is intelligible that the Javanese grew indifferent to the "purer" variant of Islam. On another level, the purer Islam was, in the eyes of the Javanese, associated with foreign cultures, as it was the religion of the coastal populace. All of these communities had been greatly influenced by Arab, Persian, South Indian, Chinese, and Malay civilizations. Since these foreigners manifested a different way of life unfamiliar to the interior Javanese, their Islam was likewise considered an alien religion.[18] Drewes more explicitly describes how the Javanese indignantly regarded the purer Islam, with

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[17] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, p. 13. See also, Robert R. Jay, *Religion and Politics*, pp. 9-11.

[18] Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, pp. 329-320.

specific reference to *Serat Darmogandul*, a noted treatise on Javanese culture:

> The whole of the book breathes rejection of Islam as being a religion foreign to Java and Javanese; moreover, a religion which had come to power as a result of the utterly reprehensible conduct of the *walis*, the venerated saints of ancient Javanese Islam who conspired against Majapait, and by the ignominious action taken by Raden Patah, the first king of Demak, against his father, the last Brawijaya of Majapait.[19]

However, the second half of the seventeenth century brought many changes in terms of social and political life as the political supremacy of Mataram remarkably weakened. These changes resulted in a form of cultural poverty which, in turn, led to Mataram's inability to resist the steady advance of Islam among the lower social levels in the rural areas. At the time, Islam was spreading by means of the slowly emerging institutionalized learning of Islam in the *pesantrens*. The *walis*, or Muslim saints, responsible for preaching Islam through these *pesantrens*, however, must have included many mystical elements in their teaching. This method of instruction possibly facilitated their contact with the Javanese people who were more accustomed to mystical concepts and ideas. Although the *walis* did not follow only one homogenous way of proselytization, the inclusion of mystical elements in their Islamic preaching resulted inevitably in developing syncretistic doctrines of Islam. Such syncretistic doctrines were compiled in the *suluk* literature, which survives until the present time; namely, through the works of court poets of Mataram, such as the encyclopedic *Serat Centini* and the mystical moralistic *Serat Cabolek*.[20]

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[19] G.W.J. Drewes, "The Struggle Between Javanism and Islam as Illustrated by the Serat Dermagandul." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 122 (1966), p.310.

[20] Both *Serat Centini* and *Serat Cabolek* have recently been examined by some Indonesian scholars. For *Serat Cabolek*, see S. Soebardi, *The Book of Cabolek: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation and Notes. A Contribution to the Study of the Javanese Mystical Tradition* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975). For *Serat Centini*, see H.M. Rasyidi, *Documents pour Servir a l'histoire de l'Islam a Java* (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1977). James L. Peacock has an interesting interpretation of the Javanese inclination to accept Islam with its Sufistic "flavor." The Sufi teachers, he says, came to Indonesia around the fourteenth century, accompanying the Muslim traders. As the Sufis came with a missionary purpose, they managed to spread the words of Islam in areas they established their new settlements. Their teachings quickly attracted many new converts because Sufism was a religion of the heart and the imagination. On the other hand, the Sufis did not offer the ossified, dry, and tortu-

Through these literary works, the court poets of Mataram, such as Yasadipura I (1729-1803) who served at the Surakarta court of Mataram under Pakubuwono III and IV, were instrumental in developing a new strategy for preserving Javanese culture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The *Serat Cabolek* of Yasadipura, for instance, according to Soebardi, indicates that its author, aware of the decline of Javanese court tradition due to the crippling of Mataram and to the growing influence of Islam, attempted to preserve the essence of Javanese cultural values and norms.[21] Yasadipura acknowledges the spread of Islam as an inevitable fact which the Javanese had to accept. However, he suggests that Islam and its *sharī'ah* should serve as a formal guide and function as merely a *wadah* or "container" of the Javanese inner spiritual life. The essential values of Javanese culture would continue to constitute the *isi*, or 'substance" and kernel. In another work of Koentjaraningrat, this issue is discussed more clearly, in the following manner:

> In the *Serat Cabolek* he [i.e., Yasadipura] proposes the acceptance of Islam, on condition, however, that the Javanese consider the religion of Allah and the *shari'ah,* or Muslim law, only as a formal guide, or as a *wadhah* (container) for Javanese culture, while letting their inner spiritual life adhere to the essential values and ideals of Javanese culture, namely the search for the spiritual purification, as well as the attainment of the Divine Unity, or the ultimate experience of the unity of Man and God.[22]

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ously complex legal systems of the medieval Muslim scholastics. "Seeking emotional and philosophical meaning, the Sufis elaborated speculative theosophies illuminating the inner life of the divine creator and the bond between creator and the creation. They taught chants that led to trance, and the stages of mortification of the flesh that culminated in ecstatic and sensual union with the divine spirit." More interestingly, it was because the Sufis were willing to fuse their own teachings with the native traditions that made the indigenous people more receptive to their teachings. See Peacock, *Indonesia: An Anthropological Perspective*, p. 24.

[21] S. Soebardi, *The Book of Cabolek*, pp. 52-53. Describing the general content of the *Serat Cabolek* Soebardi explains that the book is a document portraying the tension in Javanese religious life resulting from contact with Islam. The tension primarily took place between the *'ulamā'* as the defenders of the *sharī'ah* or Islamic law and those who rejected legalistic forms of religion and are more inclined to Javanese mysticism. For Yasadipura, the author of the work, the *sharī'ah* is only a formal guide for Javanese exterior religious life. But for the spiritual life he proposed that the Javanese should retrieve their guiding principles from the indigenous Javanese traditions, such as the one offered in the story of Dewa Ruci, which is the central theme of the *Serat Cabolek.*

[22] Koentjaraningrat, "Javanese Terms for God and Supernatural Beings"

Mataram's cultural policy was at the end directed toward gaining a harmonious balance between the ancient Javanese Hindu-Buddhist tradition and Islam, which resulted in a form of syncretistic Islam akin to Javanese mysticism.[23]

Mark Woodward has discussed the *wadah-isi* distinction in a very detailed manner. He discusses this distinction in terms of the relationship between Sufism and normative piety, which, in Javanese terms, signifies the distinction between the inner (*batin*, Arabic: *bāṭin*) and the outer (*lahir*, Arabic: *zāhir*) realities. With reference to the elaboration of the subject by Goldziher and other scholars, Woodward further explains that for Sufis, this distinction is also maintained by the Qurʾān. The outer meaning of the Qurʾān is concerned with the regulation of behavior, while its inner meaning is concerned with the "mystical path and the quest for knowledge of Allah." For the Javanese, who perceive that every single being consists of *wadah* and *isi*, this sufistic concept of inner and outer realities seems to accord adequately with their perception of the *wadah-isi* distinction. For them, Woodward states, "the universe, the state, the physical body, and normative piety are all *wadah*," whereas "Allah, the Sultan, the soul, faith, and mysticism are *isi*."[24] The *wadah* functions as the container, which preserves and circumscribes the *isi*, as otherwise the latter would be subject to rotting. For the Javanese, the *isi* holds more significance than the *wadah*, because it holds the key to mystical union. However, neither part of this distinction can be undermined, since the *wadah*, as a normative concept in the form of the *sharīʿah*, is required for the development of mystical knowledge. More interestingly, for the Javanese, it is within the Sultan's capacity to fulfill the mystical *isi*. He and his court, like the saints, are not required to conform to the behavioral norms of the *sharīʿah*. On the contrary, it is the populace—as the *wadah*—who are principally responsible for

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p. 288. Unlike in the previous spelling, the word *wadah* is written as *wadhah* in this quotation, which is meant to emphasize the "dark *d*." There are some other Javanese words pronounced with the "dark" d's, such as *dalang* (puppeteer), *waduk* (reservoir), and *dawuh* (speech). In these words, the "*d*'s" can be written with "*dh*," to be distinguished from the "light" *d* in other Javanese words, such as *wadon* (female), *dalan* (road), and *dunung* (comprehension). This distinction of "light" and "dark" d's seems to be specific in Javanese, since, like in English words, all (initial) d's are pronounced in the "dark" d's.

[23] Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, p. 323.

[24] Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 72.

fulfilling the Islamic law or the *sharī'ah*, while abstaining from mystical practices. The Sultan's obligation to perform normative piety must be fulfilled too, but it has also been entrusted to his official, called the *pengulu*, or chief Muslim cleric in his court.[25]

Based on the above presentation, it seems clear that Islam was only superficially adopted by the Javanese, and had only a limited impact on the shaping of the Javanese worldview. However, it would be unfair to place too much emphasis on the superficiality of Javanese Islam. According to Ricklefs' examination, Islam had indeed made an enormous change in the Javanese social life in the form of their acceptance of circumcision and of the Muslim burial practices instead of Hindu-Buddhist rituals, such as cremation.[26] Nevertheless, although Islam was in no way thoroughly established—in terms of its practices or institutions—it had founded its characteristic basis in the land of Java. As in the other parts of Indonesia, up to the fourteenth century Javanese Islamization "was the beginning, not the end, of a major process of change. Seven centuries later this process is still continuing."[27] Cut off from its sources of orthodoxy for much of this time, as previously noted, it would be most improbable to hope for the rapid growth of the seeds implanted in the area. Islam grew only in a gradual way, and to a certain degree was seen as stagnant or remaining in one spot. But it was by no means to lose its chance to develop and progress in the future.

Even when the Dutch East Indies Company came to Southeast Asia at the turn of the seventeenth century and tried to subjugate the greater part of the archipelago, Islam did not cease to flourish among ever greater numbers of people. The coming of the Dutch East Indies Company led to an encounter with a heavily Islamic-inspired resistance, led either by Indonesian rulers newly converted to Islam or by the *'ulamā'*, the independent teachers of Islam in the rural areas. As the Dutch managed to consolidate their expanding power over the archipelago, Muslims were faced with the loss of their political independence and their economic resources. The Muslim principalities, prior to the seventeenth century, were the rulers of the coastal regions responsible for trading spices and for transporting them from the Moluccas in the eastern tip of Indonesia to Malacca.

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[25] Ibid., p. 73.
[26] M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 13.
[27] Ibid.

It is from this important trade center of Southeast Asia that Indian, Arab, or Persian merchants, in addition to those of local ethnicities, were active players of the international trade, transporting much of valuable eastern merchandise to the Middle East, and then to Europe.[28] The Indonesian resistance against the Dutch was fueled by the spirit of Islam. This spirit grew even stronger because from the eighteen century onwards it received a fresh impetus from increasing contact with the centers of Islamic orthodoxy in the Near East. "Every year," writes Benda, "thousands of Indonesian Muslims embarked on the Mecca pilgrimage, some of them remaining there for long periods of study and returning home as bearers of orthodox teachings which were gradually displacing the mysticism and syncretism formerly prevalent in Indonesian Islam."[29]

C. The Dutch Authorities and the Spread of Islam

The Dutch were deeply concerned with the spread of Islam in the archipelago, especially since they considered it the major cause of a series of social upheavals. Beginning with the Java war led by the Prince Diponegoro in 1825, the Dutch were almost continuously threatened by serious uprisings, some of which even grew into full-scale military operations. Traditionally, the Dutch attitudes toward Indonesian Islam were a reflection of a contradictory combination of exaggerated fears and hopes, based on their misconceptions and their inadequate knowledge, or even to their total ignorance, of Islam. Islam was thought of as a strictly organized religion with a hierar-

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[28] For a comprehensive examination of the Southeast Asian trade during the early colonial period, see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*. Reid also dedicates a special discussion of how religious life experienced a great change caused by this so-called "the age of commerce" (vol. 2, pp. 132-201). Among the others, Reid states: "The age of commerce, in short, witnessed great changes in the religious life of Mainland, as of Island, Southeast Asia. Underlying much local variation, commercialization and increased mobility provided conditions that encouraged a "rationalization" of religion in a Weberian sense, strengthening the appeal of universal moral codes reinforced by scripture and a system of eternal rewards and punishments. Centralizing states allied with this trend by enforcing one of the international orthodoxies." See ibid., vol. 2, pp. 200-201. It is also important to note that the Southeast Asian trading cities were pluralistic meeting-points of peoples from all over maritime Asia. Ibid., p. 66.

[29] Harry J. Benda, "Christian Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundation of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia," in Ahmad Ibrahim at al. (eds.), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, p. 61.

chical clergy owing allegiance to the Turkish Caliph, like that of Catholicism to the Roman Church. Based on this misconception, they believed the Turkish Caliph exercised great power over Indonesian rulers and their subjects. "Everywhere in the Dutch East Indies," says Gottfried Simon, "the sultan of Turkey is regarded as the lord of all the faithful, the Caliph, the representative of the Prophet. He therefore incarnates the Pan-Moslem hope of union of all Moslems."[30] In due course, they believed that it would be possible for the Indonesians to appeal to Muslim rulers abroad, which would be a great danger to the Dutch. Their fear of Islamic insurgency prompted them to establish alliances with the Javanese princes and aristocracy, and with sultans, rajahs and local chiefs of other islands. The latter, for political reasons of their own, were known to be either lukewarm Muslims or outright enemies of zealot Muslim leaders.[31]

It is understandable that such a policy would have special repercussions on delaying the spread of Islam in Indonesia. By supporting the rule of *adat* chiefs, Dutch authority strove to limit Islamic influence. Through these *adat* chiefs too, the Dutch-Protestant missions made headway in successfully gaining new converts while resisting the furtherance of Islam. In certain areas, mainly in the interior parts of bigger islands, they could exert their influence on the peasant populace while maintaining the aristocratic order of society. In terms of quantity, they described their achievement in converting the native people with the help of the *adat* chiefs as "fishing with the net proved to be more efficient than fishing with the hook." However, the use of "the net" in gaining new converts did not give the missions remarkable success in transforming the indigenous spiritual and social life. This was only significantly acquired through the means of educational institutions. These educational institutions, in the form of missionary schools, became forceful instruments in training the younger generations to be their agents in undermining ancient traditions,[32] and introducing Western values of economic and technological civilization.

Western education promoted by the Dutch government was ulti-

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[30] Gottfried Simon, *The Progress and Assert of Islam in Sumatra* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1912), p. 27.

[31] Harry J. Benda, "Christian Snouck Hurgronje…," p. 62.

[32] W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study in Social Change* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1964), p. 205.

mately intended to be the surest means of reducing and defeating the influence of Islam in Indonesia. Reducing the influence of Islam, as suggested by Hurgronje, would mean freeing Indonesians from the narrow confines of the Islamic system, and bring them into association with European culture. In applying this policy, Hurgronje focused his attention upon the Javanese aristocracy. This class of Javanese people appeared to be the most prepared to accept Western influences due to their higher cultural level, their familiarity with Western values, and their intensive contact with European rulers, as well as their aloofness from Islam. Richard C. Martin and others have clearly illustrated this feature as follows:

> Until the very end of the colonial period, the Dutch educational system was overtly anti-Islamic. Students in Dutch language schools were discouraged, if not actually prohibited, from acquiring more than a minimum understanding of Islam. They were taught that the "authentic" Indonesian culture was that of the pre-Islamic past, and that traditional Islamic learning was, as the great Dutch Orientalist Snouck Hurgronje so bluntly put it, "medieval rubbish which Islam has been dragging along in its wake for too long."[33]

Having been deeply influenced by European civilization and aloof from Islamic tenets, the Javanese nobility functioned as cultural brokers, so to speak, bridging the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. In their association, as usually claimed, they were no longer divided by religious allegiance, and they would come to share a common culture and political allegiance.[34]

Indeed, all of these efforts are indicative of the Dutch's aims to eliminate the influence of Islam by rapidly Christianizing the majority of the Indonesian people. However, it might be another erroneous assumption held by the Dutch that the syncretistic tendency of Indonesian Islam manifested by the rural peasants would render easier conversion to Christianity in Indonesia than in other Muslim lands.[35] There were still many factors hindering the influence of Christianity among the indigenous people. One of these factors was that Christianity had adapted itself to the predominating social struc-

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[33] Richard C. Martin and Mark Woodward with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), p. 140. The quotation from Snouck Hurgronje is based on his *Mekka in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1931), p. 79.

[34] Harry J. Benda, "Christian Snouck Hurgronje…," p. 65.

[35] Ibid., p. 62.

ture, and thus had to support the race stratification subsisting in community life. On the other hand, it was evident that many of the indigenous people held to the idea that being Christian might result in attaining equality with Europeans in terms of social standing. Although "[m]any a European with his strong race prejudice does not like the native to have the same religion as the European,"[36] the former presumed Christianity to be the religion of the dominating race. Thus they began to adopt European dress and attempted to imitate the Western style of daily life. But the majority of the native people did not consider this imitation of the West as desirable, and neither did they wish to surrender their spirit to Christianity. On the contrary, it was in Islam that they found a feeling of individual worth and a sense of solidarity. Islam was believed to adequately bridge regional and tribal particularisms by means of a single Islamic unity.[37]

It is even more striking, as Wertheim further explains, that Christian propaganda could succeed only among the pagans, and that missionary activities were mainly confined to remote regions not yet affected by Islam.[38] In addition, the Dutch government seemed to have undertaken cautionary measures in order to avoid friction, by restraining missionaries from entering into typically dominant Muslim areas.[39] The Dutch were also aware that, for many Indone-

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[36] Gottfried Simon, *The Progress and Arrest of Islam*, p. 30.

[37] W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition*, p. 204.

[38] For a more extensive study on the early contact of the world religions and ethnic religious traditions see, among the others, Rita Smith Kipp and Susan Rodgers (eds.), *Indonesian Religions in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press), 1987. This book is an attempt to portray the general landscape of Indonesia's religious complexity with a special emphasis on "local ethnic religions." These 'local ethnic religions' have played an important role in the *social creation* of the interaction of world religions and village rituals. This book also tries to conceptualize those local rituals prevalent in many ethnic homelands as a component of the distinctive and systematic domain, especially through their contact with Islam and Christianity. For more specific discussion on that "local ethnic religion," see Rita Smith Kipp, *Dissociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993). This book is a comprehensive study on religious complexity of the Karo people in North Sumatra. See also John R. Bowen, *Muslim through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). Bowen's study focuses on 'local' knowledge and cultural diversity developed by the Gayo Muslims, also in North Sumatra, by elaborating, transforming and adopting elements from broader Muslim traditions. For instance, by using the Muslim idea of sainthood they try to elucidate the powers of place spirits and ancestors, etc.

[39] Robert W. Hefner, "Of Faith and Commitment: Christian Conversion in

sians, Islam had been the symbol of resistance to the colonial adoption of caste system as it had been previously to that of Hinduism. To some extent it is true that the Western penetration of the archipelago had clear consequences in religious spheres much earlier than it did in the economic and social domains. It was one of the "paradoxical consequences of Western colonialism," that the expansion of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago was unintentionally furthered by the Dutch occupancy of the area, where "the vast majority of Indonesians found in Islam a unifying force and a refuge."[40] Even as early as the arrival of the Portuguese traders Islam was felt to be a unifying force. As a result, a large number of Indonesian princes were induced to embrace the Islamic faith as a political move to counter Christian penetration.[41] They used Islam as an effective instrument to articulate anti-colonial sentiments, which played a substantial role in nationalist movement. "The incorporation of peoples from different ethnic backgrounds into a single Islamicized culture," states Roy F. Ellen, "led to the creation of new ethnic groups deriving their entire identity from an amalgam of Islamic belief and practice and custom drawn from different places."[42] The Dutch occupation of the archipelago also played an important role in unifying the country in terms of administration and communication, in which Islam continued to flourish, penetrating even deeper into the interior parts of the island.[43]

Gottfried Simon, in his work noted above, has provided a clearer elaboration of this issue deserving our immediate attention. He affirms that many of the Colonial Government's institutions unintentionally helped to promote Islam; for instance, through the up-country Government staff, the official language, and lastly, the Government schools. The Government staff, who were recruited from among the

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Muslim Java," in his *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), p. 99.

[40] W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition*, p. 204.

[41] Ibid, p. 198.

[42] Roy F. Ellen, "Ethnography and the Understanding of Practical Islam in Southeast Asia," in M. B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), p. 72. Ellen further emphasizes that "during the colonial period, to profess radical Islam was a means of expressing commitment to an Indonesian identity, a covert means of establishing national unification; a means of rallying support against a colonial power and a traditional aristocratic class (the *priyayi*) which had become absorbed into the machinery of colonial repression."

[43] C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia: Five Essays* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), p. 43.

Government school trainees, were highly esteemed by the rest of the population. Their high position in terms of social rank, in the eyes of the indigenous people, made the unconverted curious to learn more about the religion of Islam and its forms of worship. Thus, hand in hand with the Muslim peddlers, these subordinate Muslim officials and soldiers often carried on open propaganda for Islam. With regard to the official language, the Colonial rulers used Malay—which was later accepted as the Indonesian national language—as the second 'sacred' language in the Archipelago as their means of communication with the local populations. Since most of it was written in Arabic characters, it is understandable that both the Malay language and Arabic characters did strengthen the belief of the locals that they could only become civilized by means of Islam.[44]

The non-religious school sponsored by the Government played a major role in further strengthening Islam, especially when the instruction was in the hands of indigenous Muslim teachers. Disregarding the fact noted by Hurgronje previously, the Government school was considered to have brought enlightenment to the local people, especially because it provided them with a European conception of the world, through which they heard about the states of Europe, about European industry and technical arts. The natural sciences and mathematics taught in this school were believed to have delivered the young people from superstition, and armed them against the foolish beliefs by which Muslim teachers continued to attract the interest of the common people.[45] In conclusion, Simon asserts that the Dutch Colonial Government not only gave rise to the furtherance of missionary activities but also to the extensive spread of Islam. "Modern technical knowledge and discovery, Colonial protection and Colonial civilization have not only opened up the globe for the missionary enterprise; these things also turn to the advantage of our mighty rivals in the conquest of the heathen soul."[46]

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[44] Gottfried Simon, *The Progress and Arrest of Islam*, p. 30.

[45] Ibid., pp. 30-33.

[46] Ibid., p. 35. Usman Pelly, himself a Muslim scholar of Batak origin, North Sumatra, holds a different viewpoint in perceiving this fact. He maintains that the advancement of Islamic education in the Batak areas had been made before the missionary activities were begun in the region, that is through the *'ulama'* and preachers from Minangkabau, West Sumatra. In only a brief period of about twenty years, Southern Tapanuli of the Batak region had been profoundly influenced by Islam. During this period, the young Batak generation of the aristocracy and their middle classes had gone through Islam, and emerged as a new well-educated class.

However, the flourishing of Islam during the Dutch colonial era should not be taken at face value. There is another perspective for ascertaining that development. First of all, it must be kept in mind that such flourishing took place primarily in the sense of territorial expansion. Islam, according to Hurgronje, "has always been more interested in territorial expansion than in intensive Islamization of the conquered territories."[47] The strong feeling commonly held by Muslims that they belonged to the broader Muslim community in the Islamic world transcending their regional boundaries was merely an expression of that stress on this extensive spread of Islam. Islam, as a unifying force, could have extended its domain throughout the whole country, but it did not lead to any major alteration in the local comunities' ways of life or outlook. When Sarekat Islam, the first political mass movement was established in 1912, it flourished and grew increasingly radical. It gained nationwide support and was regarded by the people as their symbol of protest against colonial suppression and against social as well as economic injustices. Sarekat Islam, by so doing, successfully combined Islamic and nationalist aspirations together, and thus emerged as a sole unifying force for all elements of the nation before it finally weakened and its leadership board disintegrated in 1924.[48] On the other hand, it is evident that at this time average Indonesian Muslims only had a superficial or even defective knowledge of Islamic doctrines. This superficial knowledge, which was further exacerbated by their ignorance of the Arabic language, only brought them closer toward syncretism in belief and deficient practice in their religious performance.[49]

Islam was poorly understood by the Javanese for quite a long time. This poor understanding may have had a great influence in the interweaving of heterodoxy in their religious belief and prac-

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Many of them occupied key positions in the *adat* government system, while some others migrated to the east, where they held senior positions in the state bureaucracy of the coastal Malay sultanates. Realizing these facts, the Dutch colonial authorities took an immediate cultural intervention. They began to establish better educational institutions than those of Muslims, in congruence with their "Ethical Policy." They persuaded the local aristocrats to send their children only to Dutch schools, which provided them with modern facilities, better curricula, and promised them with better career possibilities. See Usman Pelly, "The Dichotomy between Intellectual and Ulema." *Mizan*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1986), pp. 69-70.

[47] Syed Hussein Alatas, "On the Need for an Historical Study of Malaysian Islamization." *Journal Southeast Asian History*, vol. 4, no. 1 (March 1963), p.74.

[48] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Raising Sun*, pp. 43-44.

[49] Van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam*, p. 41.

tice. Beginning from the fourteenth century, nearly all Javanese had accepted Islam as their new faith. But the Islam that they embraced had been adapted to the main configurations of the pre-existing Javanese religion. It has been previously indicated that Islam did not create many significant changes in the Javanese worldview and way of life. Beyond the formalistic rituals, or more specifically, pronouncing the profession of faith (*shahādah*), Islam was manifested in their acceptance of circumcision and refraining from eating pork.[50] On the other hand, since Islam came to Indonesia not directly from its original nucleus in Arabia but by way of Persia and India, the Islam that they embraced was already transformed by a greater emphasis on its mystical aspect, and thus was more congruent with the Javanese traditional worldview.[51] But in this mystical aspect, too, Islam neither made any significant changes in the fundamental theme of Javanese religion, nor gave it a new dimension. Instead, according to Ricklefs, it only gave "another vocabulary, a new range of explanations and illustrations, a new set of powerful ritual phrases.... It gave greater richness to Javanese religion without requiring the complete abandoning of older ideas." As a result of the minor contributions made by Islam with regard to the spiritual aspect, Ricklefs states further that, "Java came to be a Muslim society, but one in which Islam was only a part of the vast cultural heritage."[52] In the long run, this exigency contributed to the evolution of the *abangan* variant of Javanese Islam in contrast to *santri*, a term made more widely known to Western academic circles by Clifford Geertz in the mid-twentieth century.[53]

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[50] Christian Snouck Hurgronje, *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, p. 16.

[51] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 58. The works is republished in Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 17-77.

[52] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization," p. 127.

[53] The terms and concepts of *abangan* and *santri* (together with *priyayi*) have become familiar and frequently used in the Western study of the Javanese history, politics and society since the publication of Geertz's work, *The Religion of Java* (1960). While he did not invent them, as reported by Robert B. Cruikshank in his review of the work (*Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1972), pp. 39-43), "Geertz is responsible for their earliest and most thorough development as explicit and interrelated concepts." Since then the work has seen frequent reviews and comments made by scholars; the earliest of which could be the one written by C. Hoykaas, in *Man*, vol. 61 (July 1961), p. 128. The next is that made by Koentjaraningrat in *Majallah Ilmu-ilmu Sastra Indonesia*, vol. 1 (September 1963), pp. 188-191, followed by the above written by Cruikshank. Harsja W. Bachtiar gives his special comments

This *abangan* variant of Islam seemed to be the quintessential character of the Javanese Muslims. Such a case did not happen to Malaysian Muslims, for whom Islam has been deeply integrated into their Malay identity. There, as is commonly said, to be Malay means to be a Muslim. In Java, on the contrary, to be Javanese does not always necessarily mean to be a Muslim but more likely an *abangan* Muslim.[54]

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in an article "The Religion of Java: A Commentary," in Ahmad Ibrahim et al (eds.), *Readings on Islam*, pp. 278-285. For those who do not agree with Geertz, in general, they maintain that the division of Javanese into *santri, abangan* and *priyayi* is misleading, since such a division is not based on the same criteria. While the proper division into *santri* and *abangan* is based on one's commitment to Islamic doctrines, the *priyayi* denotes nobility, which can be contrasted only to the common people. Accordingly, the basis of division into *santri* and *abangan* can also be applied to the *priyayi* group, since it is not impossible to find from the latter both *santri* and *abangan*. See Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), pp. 12-13; Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (London and Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 19. See also Zaini Muchtarom, *Santri dan Abangan di Jawa* (Jakarta: INIS, 1988). However, prior to Geertz's presentation, *abangan* and *santri* in terms of religious allegiance had been discussed by some other scholars since the turn of the nineteenth century. Snouck Hurgronje, for instance, in his work *Islam di Hindia Belanda* (Originally in Dutch, entitled *De Islam in Nederlandsch-Indise*, first published in 1913), discussed the terms in describing the religious life of the Javanese people. The same examination is also employed by G.H. Bousquet in his elaborate article, "Introduction a l'étude de l'Islam Indonesien," in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, vol 2 (1938), especially pp. 172-173. See also Marshall G.S. Hodgson's criticism of Geertz's work in his *Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 551 ff.

[54] James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans,* p. 17. See also Sven Cederroth, "Indonesia and Malaysia," in David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (eds.), *Islam Outside the Arab World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 253-277. In his comparison between the position of Islam in the two countries, Malaysia and Indonesia, Cederroth, like Peacock, insists that in Malaysia Islam has been identified with the Malays and with Malay culture. As a consequence, when a non-Muslim converts into Islam, he or she automatically becomes a Malay, regardless of any earlier ethnic attachment. Islam, therefore, has been used as a primary instrument for defining Malay identity. In terms of politics, however, Islam has become a contributing factor in creating deep and unbridgeable gulfs in the society. This is unlike in Indonesia, in which Islam and politics, especially during the New Order era, have effectively been kept separate, and neither can Islam be claimed as an exclusive identity by a particular ethnic group. Under the Suharto regime, the Indonesian national identity was established, though only superficially successful, on the ideology of Pancasila. Its first principle, belief in God, is so general and unspecified that no ethnic group can oppose it. With its emphasis on religious tolerance, harmony and consensus, Pancasila as an ideology is meant to create and sustain good relations among the various ethnic groups. See pp. 274-275. See also Judith Nagata, "How to be Islamic without Being an Islamic State: Contested Models of Development in Malaysia," in Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 69.

For the Javanese, strict adherence to orthodox Islam, which means being a *santri*, might cause somebody to be dislodged from his social and cultural environment.[55]

Being *abangan*, therefore, also means being lukewarm Muslims and having only a slight concern with religious allegiance. The *abangan* generally express their detached attitude toward the rigid observance of religious doctrine. This attitude is a manifestation of their theological outlook, which was greatly influenced by the mystical orientation of the earlier religions of Java. According to the Javanese mystical perspective every single reality is to be apprehended from its monistic dimension, in which human is conceived of as merely "a drop in the ocean of God's existence." This concept, however, implies that there is no difference between the reality of human and that of God. The doctrine that human and God are of the same reality is a common belief in Java and frequently appears in Javanese mystical texts. The mystical figures such as Seh Siti Jenar, Pangeran Panggung, Ki Cabolek, and several others representing this concept are very well known in Javanese literature. At least one of them, Seh Siti Jenar, was reported to have been sentenced to death, either by the orthodox *walis* or by the court authority on the accusation of spreading heretical teachings harmful to orthodox Islam.[56] Islamic orthodoxy since then

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[55] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization," p. 127.

[56] The most illustrious legend in this issue is the one attributed to Seh [Ar. *Shaykh*] Siti Jenar or Seh Lemah Abang. He was known as the first Muslim proselytizer in Pengging area, and was regarded as a Muslim saint (*wali*) in the Central Java interior of the sixteenth century. However, his teachings were considered heretical by other Muslim saints for his claim that he himself was God, a claim similarly made earlier by al-Ḥallāj (244-309/858-922). In a treatise attributed to him, *Serat Siti Jenar*, published by Tan Khoen Swie (Kediri, 1922), he was reported to have said *"iya ingsun iki Allah"* (I myself am Allah). Thus, as a Sufi martyr, he was also called the second Ḥallāj. However, although the court judgement imposed upon him could not be other than the death sentence, he was not to be blamed except for revealing the secret truth which was hardly appropriate for the uninitiated. For a comprehensive examination of Siti Jenar's teachings, see P.J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature*, esp. pp. 296-308. For his teaching and its influence to Javanese worldview, see Sujatmo, *Reorientasi dan Revitalisasi Pandangan Hidup Jawa* (Semarang: Dahara Prize, 1992), pp. 89-121. For his inquisitions by the other saints, see D.A. Rinkes, *Nine Saints of Java*, translated by H.M. Froger (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1996), pp. 15-48. For his role in Islamic preaching in the sixteenth century Java, see H.J. de Graaf and Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, *Kerajaan-kerajaan Islam di Jawa: Peralihan dari Majapahit ke Mataram*, (Jakarta: Grafitipers, 1986), especially pp. 262-264. See also Hurgronje, *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, pp. 43-45; Ahmad Haris, "Innovation and Tradition in Islam," pp. 59-60. For Pangeran Panggung and Ki Cabolek, see Kuntowijoyo,

had to encounter pre-Islamic theological concepts prevalent among the Javanese, such as monism and pantheism. While orthodox Islam maintains that God is transcendent, the Javanese mystics, on the contrary, held that God is immanent. This different theological perspective seems to have been a great barrier preventing the two sides from agreeing with each other, as confrontational encounters increased. The result of that confrontation, according to Ricklefs, was only a limited acceptance of Islamic orthodoxy. However, it is by no means certain that the Javanese were less faithful to their religion; they even claimed to have held the true and correct belief. But when they were questioned about their neglect of daily prayers or other religious obligations they would simply answer that everybody must find his or her own way to God, the grounds commonly claimed as their basic commitment to the idea of tolerance.[57]

D. Retrospective

Based on the previous proposition it seems clear that in the eyes of Western scholars, Islamic development in Indonesia up to the turn of the last century was not very promising. Although the process of Islamization had taken place for a considerably long period, the effect of that proselytization did not produce any impressive change in the Javanese worldview and way of life. It is not surprising, therefore, to find some disparaging comments made by scholars on that predicament. Mark Woodward, for instance, after citing Geertz's view concerning the quality of the Javanese *'ulamā'* whom he describes as

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Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), pp. 123-137. See also, Taufik Abdullah, "Islam dan Pembentukan Tradisi di Asia Tenggara: Sebuah Perspektif Perbandingan," in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds.), *Tradisi dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989), esp. pp. 87-93.

[57] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization," pp. 107-108. Basically, for the Javanese, mysticism is much more elevated than the *sharī'ah*. Speculation and contemplation in religious truth, therefore, hold a higher meaning than performing uncountable rituals daily. Hinduism is considered to have a great influence in implanting this form of spiritual tendency. The mystical contemplation in its pantheistic structure was regarded as having obliterated all restrictions and thus helped the mystics to rediscover the whole reality of the universe in the human nature. While playing with the meaning of the *sharī'ah*, of *tawḥid*, and that of the conceivable world reality, they claimed to have come to the notion that every existent being would bear no meaning except the absolute unity of the Real. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, p. 43. For the reluctance of the Javanese to perform their daily religious rituals, see ibid., p. 29.

those who were "less than fully Muslims, and were more concerned only with the form rather than the content of Islam," expresses his judgement that Islam was "a thin veneer of symbols attached to a solid core of animistic and/or Hindu-Buddhist meaning."[58] It implies that underneath the surface of Islamic symbols manifested in Javanese daily life there remained animistic and Hindu-Buddhist traditions. Similar to that idea is an old saying which, according to Peacock, retains some truth for most Indonesians: "Scratch a Muslim Javanese and you find a Hindu, scratch a Hindu and you find a pagan."[59] Another image is advanced by van Leur when he says that, together with Hinduism, Islam is "only a thin, easily flaking glaze on the massive body of indigenous civilization."[60]

All of the above impressions may be justified in light of Hurgronje's consideration that Islam in Indonesia had only a short period of time to manage its intensive proselytization before it was forced to devote its energy to the problems of European encroachment. It had to counter the challenges of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and those of the Dutch later, just at the moment it finally had succeeded in gaining political control with the defeat of the Majapahit kingdom. On the other hand, as has been previously discussed, Islam tended to be more interested in expanding its territories by subjugating the neighboring non-monotheistic kingdoms rather than in intensifying its proselytization.[61]

In general, it might be plausible to say that since the fall of Pajang and the emergence of Mataram in the late sixteenth century, Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java, could not maintain its power as a dominating force. Although many attempts were made to promote the establishment of a purer Islam since the end of the nineteenth century, the result was hardly noticeable. Islam did not emerge as an invincible force capable of subduing the hegemony of the local culture. On the contrary, borrowing Gramsci's term, "at no point did a 'hegemonic' Islamic culture develop in Java."[62] The reform movements which began to increase since the last decades of the nine-

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[58] Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java*, p. 82.

[59] James L. Peacock, *Indonesia: An Anthropological Perspective*, p. 147.

[60] J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, p. 169. See also Syed Hussein Alatas, "On the Need for an Historical Study," p. 74.

[61] Syed Hussein Alatas, *ibid.*

[62] Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," p. 59.

teenth century were still irresolute, and only formed some sporadic enclaves. They were not really effective to found the general footing for thorough proselytization. However, such attempts cannot be regarded as stagnation. When an attempt was made in a certain region and grew in strength it might inspire another region to do the same. Meanwhile, when that attempt weakened or dwindled in a certain region, the other region would in turn supplant the former. Or, otherwise, there would be another group of Muslims willing to take over the movement or sustain the continuity of the effort, or to find another means to encourage reform. This feature is very significant in the progress of Islam at the end of the nineteenth century.

It is true that not all regions of Indonesia experienced the same intensive proselytization. The *pesantrens*, functioning as the foci of proselytization, did not exist in all parts of Indonesia, and they formed only exclusive enclaves in the Islamized areas.[63] Yet it does not mean that the spread of Islam was confined to those exclusive spots. Some Western scholars frequently mention the existence of the so-called *kauman* complex in the urban areas, or the so-called *putihan* group in the rural region. Hurgronje, for instance, discusses the *kauman* as a specified complex surrounding the mosque in urban districts, where the mosque officials and their co-religionists resided and sincerely devoted themselves to religious activities.[64] In this complex, some elements of Javanese traditions, such as playing *gamelan* (a Javanese orchestra), *wayang* (shadow puppet play), and *ronggeng* (a Javanese

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[63] For further discussion on the growth and the development of *pesantren*, see Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker." *Comparative Studies in Society and History: An International Quarterly*, vol. 2 (1959-1960), pp. 231-239.

[64] A short but interesting description of the *kauman* and its position in the Javanese culture is provided by Ruth McVey as follows. The *kauman*, from the word *kaum* [Ar. *qawm*, Muslim community], is the quarter of the capital inhabited by pious Muslims, most of them traders and artisans, typically nestled close to the royal palace but was in appearance and atmosphere a very different world. The difference between the two was greatly intensified in the nineteenth century under colonial rule. From this period, the Dutch authorities deliberately set out to estrange the Javanese administrative elite, the *priyayi*, from strict Islam in an attempt to remove that religion as a motivational force for their resistance and their alliance with the masses. Thus, a Javanese official who was too punctilious in his religious observance was less likely to win a favorable posting, and *priyayi* patronage of religious leaders was discouraged. See Ruth McVey, "Faith as the Outsider: Islam in Indonesian Politics," in James P. Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 201.

dance) performances were not allowed. The term *putihan* (literally means people of "the white" class) represents those who perform their religious obligations wholeheartedly, and are the opposite of the *abangan* class.[65] *Putihan*, therefore, are identical with the *santri*, whose daily life is fully regulated by the Islamic precepts.

The existence of the *kauman* and *putihan*, in addition to *pesantrens*, accordingly, represents another feature illustrative of the intensive spread of Islam and its penetration into Javanese life. Hurgronje mentions that Islamic law was ostensibly in effect in those areas, as can be observed, for instance, from the fact that the mosques were not only to function as prayer houses but also to facilitate the Islamic judiciary. Here, the *imām* (the prayer leader) and the *khaṭīb* (a staff member to deliver the Friday prayer sermons), in addition to their responsibilities as mosque functionaries, were also in charge of administering the religious court. The open space in the front part of the mosque, called *serambi*, was used for this purpose. Every Monday and Thursday the *imām* (also known as *pengulu*), accompanied by several experts on his staff, performed this judicial function. It is understandable, therefore, that the administration of the religious court was directly attached to the mosque,[66] and that in Java, religious courts were available in all district levels or *kabupatens* from about

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[65] Hurgronje, *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, p. 30. Hurgronje also discusses the *perdikan* villages that were closely associated with the idea of both the *kauman* and *putihan*. These villages were freed, by the decree of the king, from the authority of the local chiefs, so that they had no obligation to pay land tax. Instead of paying taxes, the inhabitants of the *perdikan* villages were in charge of supporting the *pesantren* activities available in their villages with all possible facilities. However, van Bruinessen disagrees with that idea. He says that not all of *perdikans* were meant to facilitate the *pesantren*. There were only four out of 211 *perdikan* villages throughout Java in the nineteenth century attached to the *pesantrens*. On the other hand, there were also many *pesantrens* in the *perdikan* villages which were not facilitated by that tax exemption. See, Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), p. 24. Geertz, in the above cited article, also discusses the *perdikan* villages which were originally based on pre-Islamic traditions. These *perdikan* villages were "assigned by the kings to individual temples, shrines, and monasteries under the control of priests or monks as sanctuaries and as fiscal supports for religious life." When Islam came to Java and the kings were converted to this new faith followed by monasteries, "what had been Hindu-Buddhist now became Islamic, a new wine in a very old bottle." See Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji," p. 231. Geertz's remark, however, implies that the establishment of *perdikan* villages had a special association with the *pesantren*. For the *perdikan* assigned to support the *pesantren*, see Claude Guillot, "Le role historique des *perdikan* ou 'villages francs': le cas de Tegalsari." *Archipel*, vol. 30 (1985), pp. 137-162.

[66] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Islam di Hindia Belanda*, pp. 20-21.

the sixteenth century.[67] Further evidence of this relationship is seen in that there are some fundamental legal terms in Indonesian which are directly adopted from Arabic, and have no precise equivalents in local Indonesian languages. The term *hukum,* which is the very word for law, for instance, is apparently borrowed from Arabic. Likewise several other words related to legal concepts, such as *hak* (rights), *adil* (just), from which the terms *keadilan* (justice) and *pengadilan* (court) are derived, *hakim* (judge), and *adat* (custom) are loan words adopted from Arabic.[68]

As previously discussed, Javanese literature also flourished coincidentally in this particular period when Islam began to make its advance into the Javanese courts. Most literary productions after the seventeenth century were concerned with Javanese mysticism. Furthermore, much of the subject matter dealt with Islamic doctrines. It reflected the Javanese interpretation of Islam and the worldview based on that interpretation. This literature is obviously syncretic in terms of doctrine and practice. However, there are also some works reflecting pure orthodox doctrines, such as *The Admonitions of Seh Bari,*[69] which is a classical work of the sixteenth century attributed to Sunan Bonang, one of the early Muslim saints of East Java. This work represents a class of literature different from that circulated among the Javanese courtiers, because the *Admonitions* sought to preserve orthodox doctrines, and "contains lengthy warnings against various heresies."[70]

It is also important to point out that likewise, since the early eighteenth century, *pesantren* literature grew enormously through the works of Muslim scholars, most of whom had completed their education in the Middle East. To mention but a few examples, ʿAbdussamad al-Palimbani was among the first graduates of Meccan and Medinan Islamic institutions of learning who specialized in sufism and theology. He became known as the author of numerous works, such as *Ḥidāyat al-Sālikīn, Sayr al-Sālikīn, Ẓahrat al-Murīd, Tuḥfat al-*

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[67] Daniel S. Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia: A Study in the Political Bases of Legal Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 10.

[68] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[69] The most recent study on this treatise has been made by G.W.J. Drewes who reedited and translated the text into English. See his work *The Admonitions of Seh Bari: 16th Century Javanese Muslim Text, Attributed to Saint Bonang* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969).

[70] M.C. Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization," p. 105.

Rāghibīn, *Rātib ʿAbd al-ʾamad al-Palimbānī*, and *Zād al-Muttaqīn fi Tawḥīd Rabb al-ʿAlamīn*. The first two of these works are, according to Haris, mainly Malay-Indonesian adaptations of al-Ghazālī's *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* and his brother's *Lubab Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*.[71]

Another scholar worthy of mention is Sayyid ʿUthmān b. ʿAbdullāh b. ʿĀqil b. Yaḥyā (1822-1913), of Arab descent and Ḥaḍramī origin. His works are mostly in the form of *fatwās*, i.e., answers to questions directed to him concerning religious matters. Among these works are: *Tawḍīḥ al-Adillah ʿalā Shurūṭ Shuhūd al-Ahillah; Al-Qawānīn al-Sharʿīyah li-Ahl al-Majālis al-Ḥukmīyah waʾl-Iftāʾīyah*, and *Taḥrīr Aqwā al-Adillah*. In West Sumatra, by the end of the nineteenth century, many scholars were also known from their prestigious works, such as Aḥmad Khaṭīb of Minangkabau, who wrote *Izhār Zaghl al-Kādhibīn fi Tashabbuhihim biʾl-Ṣādiqīn*, and *al-Manhaj al-Mashrūʿ*. The latter, according to Haris, criticizes the matrilineal system prevalent in West Sumatra.[72] In addition to the above mentioned treatises written by the Indonesian *ʿulamāʾ* there were many other works by the classical Muslim scholars of the Middle East studied in the *pesantrens*. Van Bruinessen, in his *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat*, has discussed those books available in the Indonesian Islamic institutions of learning from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. In about 1600, some of these works, either in their original Arabic or translated into Malay or Javanese languages, were brought to Europe by the Dutch. Those

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[71] Ahmad Haris, "Innovation and Tradition in Islam," p.72. For both the *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* and *Lubab Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, see Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des Oeuvres de al-Ghazali (Algazel)*, edited by Michel Allard (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1959), pp. 47-48, 135-136. With regard to the *Bidāyah*, Bouyges mentions that the work is a preliminary lessons for the beginners before they were allowed to proceed to a higher degree of learning provided by the *Iḥyāʾ*. Therefore, the work serves as an introduction to the *Iḥyāʾ*. With reference to Watt, Bouyges also mentions that the *Bidāyah* deals with the guidance for the beginners to undertake a spiritual cleansing (as prerequisite?), by which a student may be able to achieve a more advanced spiritual training by studying "the larger work for what lies beyond that." The *Bidāyah* has been translated by W. Montgomery Watt together with al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidz min al-Ḍalāl*, in his *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982). Unlike the *Bidāyah* which is definitely attributed to al-Ghazālī, the *Lubab Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* is not so clear as to whom it may be attributed. Bouyges suggests that the work is an abridgement of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ*, but it cannot be ascertained whether or not it was al-Ghazālī who made this abrigdgement. Bouyges argues that there are some manuscripts of the *Lubab* (We 99 de Berlin, Ahlwardt, t. II, p. 313, no 1708), which do not mention any author. Yet, while A.J. Uri positevely attributes the work to al-Ghazālī (*Catal.*, I, p. 92), E.P. Pusey attributes it to Aḥmad, al-Ghazālī's brother (*Catal.*, II, p. 578,5). See *Essai de Chronologie*, p. 136.

[72] Ahmad Haris, ibid, pp. 72-76.

works reflected the orthodox Islamic traditions of Shafi'ite jurisprudence, Ash'arite doctrine and Ghazālīan ethics.[73]

By considering the above exposition, it is plausible to say that in spite of some skeptical judgements of Western scholars in perceiving Indonesian Islam, in reality, there have been continuous efforts made by Muslims to develop their religious discourse. Their literary works, which cover law, fundamental beliefs, ethics, Sufism, and guidance to devotional rites, as noted above, strongly indicate that there have been arduous attempts to strengthen Muslims' religious beliefs as well as to deepen their understanding of religious doctrines. It goes without saying that the development of such a religious discourse was only predominant in specific areas of the *pesantren* or *kauman* enclaves. Nevertheless, their role should not be underestimated. It was from these enclaves that the further development of Indonesian Islam in the form of more institutionalized movements in the early twentieth century originated. On the other hand, it was also with these religious literary products that Muslim scholars endeavored to bring Indonesian Islam closer to a "purer" or "more pristine" Islam, as dictated by the authoritative doctrinal sources. Therefore, it would be less than fair to consider Indonesian Islam by confining oneself to examining merely Muslims' external aspects of their cultural life, while ignoring their intellectual achievements, as manifested in their religious literary products.

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[73] Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat*, pp. 27-32. See also his article, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the *Pesantren* Milieu, Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library." *BKITLV*, no. 146 (1990), pp. 226-269; Soebari, "Santri Religious Elements as Reflected in the Book of Tjentini." *BKITLV*, vol. 127, pp. 339 ff. Soebari, on the auhtority of Drewes, suggests that the *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazālī was already known to the Javanese as early as sixteenth century, and served as a reference work in a Javanese *primbon*.

CHAPTER TWO

REDEFINING ISLAMIC ORTHODOXY IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

A. Islamic Orthodoxy, an Overview

Although the word "orthodox" has no precise equivalent term in Arabic[1] and is claimed by some to be out of place in an Islamic context,[2] (because Islam has no councils or synods, nor ecclesiastical institutions to determine the criterion of orthodoxy),[3] the concept of orthodoxy can certainly be found among the classical works of Muslim thinkers. *First*, albeit expressed in various terms, orthodoxy is an idea found within all the major religious traditions, including Islam.[4] *Second*, the term "orthodoxy" is used to indicate the possibility of distinguishing between what is true and what is false, and is obviously present in Islamic tradition. By referring to the general notion of orthodoxy as the "right belief or purity of faith… in accordance with the teaching and direction of an absolute extrinsic authority,"[5] it seems inaccurate to assume that such an idea was not

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[1] Abdurrahman Masʿud, "Sunnism and 'Orthodox' in the Eyes of Modern Scholars," in *al-Jāmiʿah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, no. 61 (1998), p. 108.

[2] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), p. 6.

[3] George Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," in Marlin L. Swartz (ed.), *Studies on Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 253. In a more elaborate examination of this issue, Bernard Lewis suggests that the term orthodoxy is inappropriate to be applied to the Islamic situations. The word orthodoxy, according to his point of view, derives from Christian history and institutions, and reflects particular circumstances that have no parallel or equivalent in Islam. Like Makdisi, Lewis also maintains that in Islam there were no councils or synods to hammer out an agreed formula of doctrine, an institution that Muslims have never established in promulgating official truth. See, Bernard Lewis, "The Faith and the Faithful," in his *Islam and the Arab World: Faith, People, Culture* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 27.

[4] Sheila McDonough, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy." *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 11, p. 124.

[5] Charles J. Callan, "Orthodoxy," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, p. 330. *The Oxford English Dictionary* gives another definition of orthodoxy as the "right, correct, true [doctrine], in accordance with what is accepted or authoritatively established as the true view or right practice." See vol. 7, p. 212.

known among Muslim thinkers. *Third*, Islam is a religion very deeply concerned with maintaining its doctrinal purity. The deviation from this doctrinal purity, more commonly known as heresy or innovation (*bidʿah*), has been a subject of keen examination since the early period of Islam, especially among theologians and heresiographers. Al-Ashʿarī (d. 935), al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and al-Shahrastānī (d. 1125), for instance, were at the forefront of defining the parameters of Sunnī Islam. Their works in this field represent attempts to provide guidelines to true belief and to defend it against those regarded as heretics and deviants.[6] In Islam, as is also the case in other religions and civilizations, the writing of works of heresiography is therefore conceived of as a defense of orthodoxy. In Islam it was one of the dominant intellectual and literary enterprises for many centuries, so much so that Islam itself has been described as "an ultra-heresiographical religion centered on the establishment and defense of dogma."[7]

However, since only one of the five pillars of Islam explicitly deals with matters of belief, Islam can be said to be more concerned with practice than belief, more with law than with theology, or more with orthopraxy than with orthodoxy.[8] This is demonstrated by the fact that, according to Schacht, Muslims were more often engaged in conflict with each other over legal matters than over questions of theology.[9] However, since Islamic law or the *sharīʿah* does not consist only of legal rules but also of some elements that might be classified as theological, the distinction between the *sharīʿah* and theology cannot be seen as absolute. They rather complement each other and constitute the whole unity of Islamic doctrine. The *sharīʿah* cannot be established without a theological basis, any more than theology can be realized in practice without the *sharīʿah*. A true Muslim must be equally capable of implementing these elements of doctrine in his

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[6] The works of those scholars in this field are mainly Al-Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, al-Baghdādī's *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, al-Ghazālī's *Faiṣal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Islām wa-l-Ẓandaqah* and *Faḍā'iḥ al-Bāṭinīyah wa-Faḍā'il al-Mustazhirīyah*, and al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*.

[7] John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), p. 12.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Joseph Schacht, "Theology and Law in Islam," in G.E. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Theology and Law in Islam* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrosowitz, 1971), pp.3-4, also quoted in Henderson, ibid.

daily life. "*Sharīʿah,*" says Rahman, "is a comprehensive concept and includes the spiritual truth of the Sūfī (*ḥaqīqah*), the rational truth (*ʿaql*) of the philosopher and the theologian, and the law."[10] Islamic orthodoxy has firmly established a number of credal articles and rules of ritual observance as signifying orthopraxy. Departure from this basic core of doctrine indicates a deviance from correct belief, thus leading to heterodoxy.[11]

But who is the orthodox Muslim? Despite the clear notion of orthodoxy given above, it remains difficult to determine to which party of Muslims the term orthodoxy can be appropriately applied. Based on Henderson's examination, there are several reasons why this difficulty may occur. *First*, Islam, unlike Roman Catholic Christianity, has no central institution holding ultimate legitimacy stating authoritatively what constitutes the right doctrine. *Second*, as already noted, Islam is allegedly more concerned with law and practice than with doctrine. *Third*, certain branches of Islam that have been condemned or categorized as heretical might claim that the tradition and doctrine they follow are based on a legitimate authority of distinguished pedigree, thus allowing them to regard themselves as the true believers. *Finally*, if orthodoxy is characterized as the doctrine supported by a ruling class, one must also consider the fact that some divergent sects, regarded as heterodox by Muslims of later age, had in their era enjoyed official support from various caliphs and even attained the status of state doctrine.[12] Henderson makes this point in view of the Muʿtazilite hegemony of the Abbasid caliphate, when the caliphs al-Maʾmūn, al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāthiq (827-847) required all of their officials to affirm the Muʿtazilite dogma, particularly the createdness of the Qurʾān. Although Muʿtazilism has come to be regarded as heterodox by most Muslims in later times, it did enjoy official support and was even regarded as state orthodoxy at one point in Islamic history.[13]

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[10] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 2nd edition, p. 111.

[11] Aziz al-Azmeh, "Orthodoxy and Hanbalite Fideism." *Arabica: Revue d'Etudes Arabes*, vol. 35 (November 1988), p. 255.

[12] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy*, pp. 49-50.

[13] Ibid., p. 50. In the history of Islamic theology this issue is well known as the Inquisition or *al-Miḥnah*. These Abbasid Caliphs intended to promote Muʿtazilism as the state theology and thus required all officials and social figures adopt it. Among the issues by which they were tested was the createdness of the Qurʾān as held by the Muʿtazilites. For the Muʿtazilites, as supporters of human freedom, to say that

To designate which doctrine is to be considered right and orthodox, to some extent, means to acknowledge it as an official one. But, as noted above, Islam has no single organized religious institution empowered to formulate authoritatively the articles of belief of an official Islam. The works of the *'ulamā'* in various fields of Islamic learning remain individual enterprises having no divine sanction commanding that they be followed by all Muslims. Moreover, in Islam it is the right of every individual Muslim to refer directly to the sources of doctrine, namely the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, for his guidance in practicing religious doctrine, as far as he is capable. Similarly, every theological school or group of religious scholars has upheld its own version of orthodoxy, as Knysh points out:

> In the absence of either ecumenical councils, or a centralized church authority capable of saying what an orthodox dogma would be, no religious teaching could formally be proclaimed "orthodox". Moreover, since medieval Islam knew no clergy, and men of religion were "not cut off from other believers by any form of ordination," theoretically every Muslim was free to propagate his own vision of Islam, simultaneously condemning other visions as "corruptions" of the initially "pure" *Qur'anic* message and Prophetic testament (*sunnah*).[14]

Accordingly, there is only a very general standard by which to determine which doctrine is official, valid and accepted, that is, the doctrine which is lawful and consequently enjoys divine sanction. Such a doctrine should go back to revelation, since revelation, for Muslims, is the true official doctrine, which they should never fail to transmit faithfully, since otherwise ignorance and error prevail.[15]

However, since individual understandings of revelation may vary greatly from time to time and from place to place, Muslims require an institution that is authoritatively capable of bringing them to a common mind. This institution is called *ijmā'*, signifying "the agreement of all the believers in general, and in particular that of the

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the Qur'ān was created justified their opposition to the predestinarian idea which maintained that "since certain historical events are mentioned in the Qur'ān, these must have been eternally known by God and therefore predetermined for the apparent agent," thus concluding that all events were determined by the *Qadar* of God. See W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), p. 179.

[14] Alexander Knysh, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment." *The Muslim World*, vol. 83, no. 1 (January 1993), p. 53.

[15] Jacques Waardenburg, "Official and Popular Religion in Islam." *Social Compass*, vol. 25 (1978), p. 325.

qualified to whom was entrusted the task of taking the decision in juridical matters."[16] Although it constitutes only the third basis of Islamic religious law after the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, in practice it holds the most important position. "*Ijmāʿ*," according to Farah, "became a very important principle for the justification of religious beliefs or practices not specifically sanctioned by the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*."[17] Thus, in theory, *ijmāʿ* is "the unanimous agreement of the *Ummah* as a regulation (*ḥukm*) imposed by God."[18] This *ijmāʿ* should function as a means to facilitate the unity of the *ummah* by reducing the causes of dissent (*ikhtilāf*) in matters of religion.[19] This is what Rashīd Riḍā meant when on being asked to explain the saying attributed to the Prophet that dissent among Muslims is a sign of divine mercy, he asserted that this idea—were it correctly attributed to the Prophet—should not be used to justify disputations in religious matters. He insisted rather that this dissent referred to the fact that "not all men are alike in their social actions and professional activities."[20] In reality, however, the actual development of Islam witnessed

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[16] M. Bernand, "Idjmaʾ." *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 3, p. 1024. For another examination of *ijmāʿ* and its position in Islamic jurisprudence as well as its function in establishing the doctrinal Islam, see Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 30, 60 ff.; Wael B. Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); especially pp. 75-81; Caesar E. Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observance* (New York: Barron's, 2000), pp. 187-188.

[17] Farah, ibid.

[18] Bernand, "Idjmaʿ," p. 1023.

[19] Joseph Schacht, for instance, in this regard reported that the "success of some schools and the extinction of others were brought about partly by the growing weight of consensus itself, and partly by external circumstances…. Even within the individual schools and their relationship to one another consensus acts as an integrating principle. Not only will the recognized doctrine of each school, through the elimination of stray opinions, become more and more uniform and settled down to the most minute details as time goes on; it also happens not infrequently that a school which, from its own premises would have to regard an act as indifferent or permissible, prefers in fact to classify it as commendable or reprehensible, so as not to diverge too far from those other schools which regard it as obligatory or forbidden." See his *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, pp. 67-68.

[20] Ignaz Goldziher, "Catholic Tendencies and Particularism in Islam," in Merlin L. Swartz (ed.), *Studies on Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 136. For this explanation Goldziher refers to the *fatāwā* of al-Shaykh Rashīd Riḍā in *Al-Manār*, vol. 14 (May 1911), pp.343-344. For Riḍā, justifying disputation in religious matters contradicts the Qurʾānic injunction that the Muslims should avoid disunity and hostility. He refers, among the others, to the Qurʾānic verse 3:105, "Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear Signs. For them is a dreadful penalty." The Qurʾanic translation used throughout this thesis is based on ʿAbdullāh Yūsuf ʿAlī, *The Meaning of the Holy Qurʾān* (Brenton, Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1992).

a number of variations in thought and practice which evolved into a number of schools and sects.

As differences are real and unavoidable, judgements as to what is true should be based on matters on which all the members of the *ummah* (community) agreed. However, there is a problem where the term *ummah* is concerned. According to Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), it is comprised of the Companions of the Prophet, who were the only ones eligible to perform *ijmāʿ*. Ibn Ḥazm frequently uses the term *ulū al-amr* to refer to the *amīrs* and scholars who had to guide Muslims by imposing them only the ordinances that God and the Prophet had commanded.[21] On the other hand, for al-Bazdawī (d. 1089) and al-Sharakhsī (d. 1096) of the Ḥanafite school, the *ummah* is to be understood as referring to those "who have not adopted pernicious doctrines (*ahwāʾ*) and innovations (*bidaʿ*)." Consequently, and to the extent to which the *ummah* has been able to protect itself against such corrupting beliefs, they have preserved the truth; and the *ijmāʿ* they have achieved can, therefore, be considered a source of truth of equal value with the Qurʾān and the Sunnah.[22] *Ijmāʿ* can thus be considered a valid source of truth when it reverberates with the agreement of the whole community, whose infallibility resides in its unanimity.[23] Therefore, it also functions as the sole universally accepted test of right belief, "which in modern terms might be translated as the climate of opinion among the learned and the powerful."[24]

This *ijmāʿ* was undertaken to formulate or decide Islamic dogma. Nevertheless, in reality, *ijmāʿ* did not apply to all Muslims, since it was still possible that "what one group regards as consensus, another group rejects."[25] There have always been other schools of Islamic thought upholding different sources of authority who have not recognized the validity of *ijmāʿ*. The Kharijites, for instance, adhered to

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[21] M. Bernand, "Idjmaʿ," p. 1024.

[22] Ibn Taymīyah, *ʿAqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Firqat al-Nājiyah*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Razzāq ʿAfīfī (Egypt: Anṣār al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, 1358 AH.), p. 7.

[23] M. Bernand, "Idjmaʿ," p. 1025. Usually Muslim scholars refer to a saying related to the Prophet, "My community does not agree on an error" to justify this allegation. Based on this prophetic assertion, Muslims, according to W. Montgomery Watt, have a peculiar skill in achieving a common mind and consensus on legal and theological matters. See W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Creeds: A Selection* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 4.

[24] Bernard Lewis, "The Faith and the Faithful," p. 28.

[25] George Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," p. 253.

the Qur'ān alone as the basis of their authority, while the Muʿtazilites depended on rational theology and the Shiʿites on the charismatic *imāms* as their criteria in judging the validity of doctrine.[26] The position of *ijmāʿ* as a source of doctrine, therefore, was only recognized by the party that later on became known as the Sunnites, "those who claimed to be adherents of the correct or standard prophetic practices [and] those who followed the Sunnah (beaten path) of the Prophet."[27] This standard practice of Muḥammad was transmitted to Muslims through inherited Traditions containing the words, deeds and tacit approvals of the Prophet, called the Sunnah or Ḥadīth. Through their strict adherence to these Traditions, the Sunnites themselves forged an opposition to *bidʿah* or innovations. In addition, they took a conservative position against both the rational theology of the Muʿtazilite and the charismatic authority of the Shiʿite *imāms*, looking back to the original sources of revelation, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, as the bases of right belief and practice.[28] Thus, *ijmāʿ* has long been considered a distinctive mark of Sunnī Islam, while authoritarian principles have always been characteristic of Shiʿism.

After surveying the religious traditions prevalent in Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Neo-Confucianism, Henderson tries to determine what attributes best classify a religious belief or practice as either orthodox or heterodox. According to his findings, there are five particular qualities useful in making such a classification, namely primacy or originality, a true transmission from the founder to the present day, unity, catholicity, and conception of orthodoxy as a middle way between heretical extremes. The following is a brief

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[26] For further discussion on the Shiʿite attitude toward *ijmāʿ* see, Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 191. The Shiʿites disputed with the Sunnites in the use of *ijmāʿ* especially in dealing with the problem of the leadership of the Muslim community succeeding the Prophet. While the Sunnites claimed that Abū Bakr was the legitimate caliph based on the consensus of the believers, the Shiʿites, in contrast, rejected that decision. For them, the legitimacy of the Prophet successors should be based on the authority sanctioned by the Prophet himself. Goldziher gives further emphasis as he says: "If the Sunnis base their recognition of the historical caliphate on the consensus of believers, which after the Prophet's death gave form to, and sanctioned, the polity of Islam, the Shīʿis see this very recognition as proof that mere *ijmāʿ* does not always match with truth and righteousness. Indeed, in resolving the question of the caliphate according to Sunnī view, the *ijmāʿ* gave its sanction to injustice and violence." For another perspective of the Shiʿite's position toward *ijmāʿ*, see Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observance*, p.188.

[27] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 52.

[28] Ibid.

discussion of those five qualities which are applicable on Islam, based on Henderson's survey.[29]

Primacy means a pure and primary form that has remained unchanged from the beginning. Based on this notion, orthodoxy in Islam signifies what every Muslim should uphold as the pure and primary form of doctrine, removed from any innovation and alteration. By this principle too, Islam should be purified of any element of non-Islamic mysticism, magic, and animism that might have been incorporated into it. Among the existing groups of Muslims today, the Sunnites claim to be the upholders of the pure and primary expression of Islamic doctrine, which has remained unchanged from the beginning. All who oppose this idea are liable to the accusation of heresy. Following W. Montgomery Watt's argument, Henderson insists that this tendency grew out of a tradition that goes back to pre-Islamic times when the accepted ideal was to follow exactly the time-honored practice of the tribe or clan. The most prominent supporters of the Sunnīs were the Ashʿarites and Hanbalites. Both of these schools of Islamic doctrine claimed that their own particular sect was not really a sect (*firqah*), but rather a continuation of the pristine form of Islam.[30]

True Transmission. In order to guarantee the primacy or authenticity of doctrine it had to be transmitted and communicated to subsequent generations of believers in a reliable manner. The Sunnī Muslims have always placed a great deal of emphasis on this issue and have integrated their tradition into a unified body or system of belief. Accurate transmission is therefore required in order to preserve

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[29] Ibid., pp.85-112.

[30] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 88. Watt's article cited by Henderson, "The Great Community and the Sects," is a comprehensive examination of the early formation of the Muslim community and its further development into sectarian divisions. Watt begins his discussion with the issue commonly related to by Muslim heresiographers, the division of the Muslim community into seventy-three sects. By referring to Goldziher, Watt reports that this tradition was accepted by Muslims due to a misunderstanding of a somewhat similar tradition that "faith has sixty-odd branches (*shuʿbah*), and modesty is a branch of faith." There is a similar tradition speaking about Judaism which has seventy-one virtues, and Christianity has seventy-two and Islam has seventy-three. Unfortunately both Goldziher and Watt do not mention the source from which they quote this Ḥadīth. But "it is difficult," says Watt, "to see why the founder of a religion should boast about the number of sects into which it is divided." See W. Montgomery Watt, "The Great Community and the Sects," in G. E. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Theology and Law in Islam* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrossowitz, 1971), pp. 25-26.

Islamic tenets in their pristine state without alteration. Any alteration from this pristine teaching signals a deviation, itself a danger to the body of doctrine as a whole. In general, this transmission has been institutionalized in the *isnād*-criticism; that is, the effort to authenticate the chains of transmission of the Ḥadīth, a methodology which later on developed into an elaborate science.[31] By means of *isnād*-criticism Muslim scholars in this field were able to show that the authentic Ḥadīth, or Traditions about Muḥammad, had been handed down with complete verbal accuracy from the Companions of the Prophet to later generations of the Muslim community.[32]

However, the *isnād* is not confined to Ḥadīth transmission only, but is a vital factor in the transmission of historical facts as well. The classical historians, such as Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), Ibn Hishām (d. 833) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), depended heavily on the *isnād* in evaluating the minutest details of Islamic history. The *isnād* is also commonly found in traditions affecting Qurʾānic exegesis, especially in its formative phase. Al-Ṭabarī, for instance, who in addition to his reputation as historian, is also known as an exemplary "traditional" exegete. In his voluminous Qurʾānic commentary, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Collection of Explanations for the Interpretations of the Qurʾān), al-Ṭabarī offers not only his own interpretation but also quotes the statements of Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 687), the first great Qurʾānic exegete and reputed founder of the discipline, as well as those of other authorities. Al-Ṭabarī carefully transcribed the *isnād* or chain of transmitters by

[31] *Isnād* is a chain of authorities that constitutes an essential part of the transmission of a tradition. In the early formative period of Islamic doctrine it was insignificantly realized, but as the first century of Islam advanced, the need for stating one's authority developed. According to the strictest rule, it is not enough to give merely the contents of the tradition (*matn al-ḥadīth*). A Ḥadīth narrator, called the *rāwī*, must inscribe on his manuscript the name of the *shaykh* from whom he received the traditions, telling how and when this took place, along with the line of authorities through whom he heard it. See J. Robson, "Isnād" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 4, p. 207; idem, "Ḥadīth" in ibid., vol. 3, especially p. 27. For a discussion on the use of *isnād* in Islamic history see J. Robson, "Ibn Isḥāq's use of the *Isnād*," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 38 (1966), pp. 449 ff. Although the criticism of the Ḥadīth did not apply solely to the *isnād*, it remains an instrumental part. A technical term used regarding the reliability or otherwise of traditionists is *al-jarḥ wa'l-taʿdīl*, "disparaging and declaring the truth." During the 2nd /8th century, when many false Ḥadīths were being invented, interest in the quality and credibility of Ḥadīth transmitters developed. As a branch of Islamic tradition, *al-jarḥ wa'l-taʿdīl* formed a recognized part of the *ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth* when Muslim scholars began to write on this subject in the 4th /10th century. See J. Robson, "al-Djarḥ wa'l-Taʿdīl," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 2, p. 462.

[32] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 94.

which each statement or commentary came down to him. There might be a dozen or more transmitters for each piece of information.[33] All of these points indicate that accurate transmission played an essential role in sustaining the authenticity of Islamic doctrines.

Unity. Another important feature of orthodoxy is seen in its unity and consistency, and in its concern with avoiding schisms. This is in contrast to the general tendency of heretical movements which were marked by inconsistency, multiplicity and novelty. "The Truth is one, while 'the sects'… form a multitude."[34] But since Sunnī Islam, as representative of Islamic orthodoxy, has long nurtured within itself several distinct theological and legal schools, the idea of an orthodox unity becomes more difficult to maintain. Sunnī apologists and heresiographers tried in fact to extend this unity back to the early years of Islam when "a unified theocratic community" had supposedly existed. The breakup of this community brought about the fragmentation of an earlier and absolutely monolithic unity. Therefore, reference to this ideal of a unified community became a standard measure of whether a school was either orthodox or heterodox. This is also reflected in the idea that Islamic history began with a golden age which was followed by a period of relaxation of standards, deviation, and finally division. This *a priori* vision of history is allegedly based on a saying of the Prophet frequently cited in Islamic literature to the effect that, "The best of you are those of my own epoch (*ḳarn*), then those who follow on, then those who follow them."[35] It is also evident that the Sunnī heresiographers tended to minimize this fragmentation. Al-Baghdādī and al-Shahrastānī, for instance, were inclined to disregard the differences between the emerging Ashʿarite and Maturidite theological schools, the two most orthodox Sunnī schools. Likewise, Ibn Taymīyah asserted that "all

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[33] W. Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977), p. 168. See also Helmut Gatje, *The Qur'ān and its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Muslim Interpretations*, translated by Alford T. Welch (London: Routledge & Paul Kegan, 1976), p. 34.

[34] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 95.

[35] E. Chaumont, "Salaf wa'l-Khalaf." *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 8, p. 900. It is the first three generations of Muslim community—comprising that of the Companions or *ṣaḥābah*, followed by that of the Successors (*tābiʿīn*), and that of the Successors of the Successors (*atbāʿ al-tābiʿīn*)—which are distinguished from the rest of the Islamic community, and it is in them that the community is to be recognized as the "Pious Predecessors," *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

those who are close to the Sunna disagree among themselves less than those who are far from it, such as the Muʿtazilīs and the Rāfidīs, whom we find to be in disagreement among themselves more than any other group."[36] This is the state of affairs which may have led Henderson to conclude that "the more orthodox were the more unified and the more heretical the more fragmented."[37]

Catholicity. Unlike the early Christian writers who used the idea of the catholicity of orthodoxy as a polemical weapon against heretics, Sunnī Muslims were more inclined to use it to alleviate strife rather than to condemn. The Ashʿarites, for instance, while regarded to represent the most orthodox of the Muslim theological schools, were also known as the most conciliatory and harmonizing, at least in their early phases. We read that Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, the founder of the Ashʿarite school, was himself a genuine eclectic willing to reconcile all the established Sunnī tendencies. In terms of the legal system, for instance, sometimes he appeared as a defender of Shafiʿite doctrine, while on other occasions he expressed himself as a Malikite or as a Ḥanbalite. This eclectic tendency is also apparent in his theological thought, which at the same times appears more rationally inclined, and yet at other times seems to be more faithful to the texts, particularly the Ḥadīth. Al-Ashʿarī's inclination to maintaining eclectic stance was supposed to have been based on his insistence that "only by combining the views of several later theologians could one hope to approach the catholicity of the Prophet."[38]

This tendency toward catholicity, as we have pointed out, was more characteristic of the early formation of the Ashʿarite school. However, with the centrality accorded in Sunnī Islam to the concept of *ijmāʿ* (consensus), which was accepted as the central pillar of orthodoxy, Sunnī theologians found it harder to disregard sectarian controversies that had raged since the early formative period. Nevertheless, at least as far as the four schools of Sunnī law were concerned, later Sunnī orthodoxy was also quite liberal and accommodationist. Despite the doctrinal diversity of these schools, as well as their mutual hostility during their formative period, they were

[36] Ibn Taymiyah, *Ibn Taymiyah's Against the Greek Logicians*, translated with an introduction and notes by Wael B. Hallaq (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.153.
[37] Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 96.
[38] Ibid., p. 99.

(and still are) seen as different but inseparable aspects of the same unity.[39]

The Middle Way. A final feature of orthodoxy, based on Henderson's survey, deals with the idea that orthodoxy is a middle way between two heretical extremes. In Islam this concept is very well known, since Islam is itself celebrated as a religion more adaptable to the idea of the middle way. Both Muslim and Western scholars have described Islam as a religion of the "just middle" (*wasaṭ*) between Christianity and Judaism. Among Muslim scholars, Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328), the great Ḥanbalite theologian, was reported to have said that "[t]he Jews, then, are those who fall short of the truth and the Christians, who go beyond the bounds."[40] The same idea was held by the celebrated Muslim historian al-Ṭabarī who, in comparing Muslims, Christians and Jews, stated:

> God describes the Muslims as a people of the middle path because of their middle position in religion. They are neither people of excess like the Christians who went to extremes in their monastic practices as well as in what they said concerning Jesus, nor are they people of deficiency like the Jews, who altered the Book of God, killed their prophets, gave the lie to their Lord, and rejected faith in Him. Rather they are people of the middle path and of balance in their religion.[41]

Among Western scholars, Julian Baldick was reported to have described Islam as a "religion which tries to steer a middle course between Christian spirituality and Jewish legalism."[42]

Henderson states that to locate Islam in a median position between Judaism and Christianity aims "to assert the distinctiveness of Islam in relation to its main rivals, and more particularly to establish its place as the most advanced stage or expression of divine revelation,

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[39] Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[40] Ibid., p. 106, citing Ibn Taymīyah's *Struggle against Popular Religion: With an Annotated Translation of His "Kitāb Iqtidā' aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jahīm."* Translated and edited by Muhammad Umar Memon (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), p. 92. The same idea also appears in another treatise of Ibn Taymīyah, *'Aqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Firqat al-Nājiyah*, pp. 12-13. In this latter work, with reference to some Qur'ānic verses describing both Jews and Christians, Ibn Taymīyah asserts that the Muslims took the medium way (*tawassaṭū*) between Jewish and Christianity. The Muslims, unlike the Christians, did not say that Jesus (al-Masīḥ) is God or His son; nor did they accuse him like the Jews of being a bastard or *walad bughīyah*. Instead, they affirmed that he is the servant of God, His messenger and His word.

[41] F.E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 106.

[42] Quoted in Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy*, p. 106.

as a sort of a final synthesis to Jewish thesis and Christian antithesis."[43] Within Islam, this middle ground was claimed by the Sunnīs as a means of mediating between Islam's fractious sects, such as the Kharijites, Shiʿites, Murjiʾites, Jabrites, and anthropomorphists. The Sunnīs tried to do away with sectarian frictions by mapping out a middle way, broad enough so that it could include—or at least accommodate—all but the most extremely deviant. This can be seen more clearly in the assertion reportedly made by Ibn Taymīyah, who was known as a relatively uncompromising Ḥanbalite theologian, in describing the Sunnīs as the people within Islam who occupied the "just middle (*wasaṭ*)."[44] The Ashʿarites, perhaps the most famous school of Sunnī Islam, claimed that their primary religious vocation was to mediate between several types of extremes. In the words of Wensinck, "it was precisely this attitude which promoted its influence and contributed to make it the official representative of orthodox Islam."[45]

Although initially it was not easy for the Ashʿarites to win acceptance as the official representatives of orthodox Islam, their school of theology nevertheless gained considerable support from the traditionists, or Ahl al-Ḥadīth, whose sense of superiority derived from their rigid adherence to the Salaf as the true defenders of the Islamic faith.[46] The Ashʿarites were accepted and appreciated by the Sunnī community because of the principles of faith which they affirmed, namely the existence of God and His attributes, prophecy, and the refutation of associationists, unbelievers and the people of the Book.

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[43] Henderson, ibid., p. 107.

[44] Ibid.

[45] A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 106.

[46] Among other reasons why Ashʿarism was not easily accepted as the orthodox school is that the Ashʿarite method of argumentation was deeply rooted in speculation, which was also very characteristic of the Muʾtazilites. Being the successors of the Muʿtazilites, the Ashʿarites could hardly escape the suspicion of many conservative '*ulamā*'. The latter considered their speculative theology as illegitimate and an irresponsible inquiry into what should be accepted at face value. In addition, the Ashʿarites did not possess a legal theory of their own. Although they were associated with the Shafiʿite school of jurisprudence from the beginning, in its subsequent progress Ashʿarism was propagated by scholars belonging to other legal schools, such as al-Bāqillānī of the Malikites and Ibn ʿĀqil of the Ḥanafites who then became a Ḥanbalite. Moreover, their position with regards to the problem of *imāmah* or the community leadership over which the early Muslims were split into three parties—the Sunnis, the Shīʿah and the Khawārij—was not clearly stated in their doctrines. See Alexander Knysh, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy," p. 53-54.

In addition, despite their heavy reliance on speculative reasoning in theological matters, the Ashʿarites were still appreciated for their refutation of the Jahmīyah, the Muʿtazilah, the Rāfiḍah, and the Qadarīyah, insofar as the latter's doctrines evidently diverged from the traditionalists, i.e., the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. It was because they were perceived as opposed to the adversaries of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Ḥadīth, however, that Ashʿarism was conceded to be a part of the Ahl al-Sunnah, for if al-Ashʿarī had not been close to the traditionalists, he might very well have been placed in the same category as Muʿtazilite theologians, such as al-Jubbāʾi (d. 303/915) and Abū Hāshim (d. 331/942). Nonetheless, Ashʿarite doctrine was almost entirely in agreement with what had been defined as the Sunnah, especially in such areas as the divine attributes, free will, the imamate, intercession, the "basin" (*al-khawḍ*), the "bridge" (*al-ṣirāṭ*), and the "balance."[47]

The Ashʿarites were also firmly accepted by leading Shāfiʿite scholars, such as Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrazī. Al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1058), who taught as a professor of Shāfiʿite jurisprudence at the Niẓamīyah *madrasah* for approximately seventeen years, was reported to have said, "The Ashʿarites are entirely welcome among the [Shāfiʿite] people because they trace their origin back to that of the Ḥanbalites."[48] Moreover, al-Ashʿarī himself stated that his doctrines were in agreement with those of the Sunnīs, and that he was actually indebted to Ḥanbalite doctrine, as he mentioned in his introductory remarks in *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah*:

> The position we take and the religious views we profess are: to hold fast to the Book of our Lord and to the *sunnah* of our Prophet and to what has been related on the authority of the Companions and the Followers and the *imāms* of hadith. In these we find our firm support. Moreover we profess what Abū ʿAbdallāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal taught—may God cause his face to be radiant, elevate his rank, and make his reward abundant—and we contradict all who contradict his teachings; for he is the most excellent *imām* and the perfect chief, through whom God has brought to light truth and abolished error, made distinct

[47] George Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," in Merlin L. Swartz (ed.), *Studies on Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 260.

[48] Ibid., p. 261, quoted from Ibn Taymīyah, *Naqḍ al-Manṭiq*, ed. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq Ḥamzah, Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣanʿ, and Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī (Cairo: al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadīyah, 1951), p. 15. For further discussion on the Shafiʿites' acceptance of Ashʿarism see, George Makdisi, "Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History." *Studia Islamica*, vol. 17 (1962), pp. 64-70.

> the right path and conquered the fallacious innovations of the heretics… and the doubt of the doubters. May God have mercy on him; he is the *imām* of highest standing and the honored and admired friend.[49]

Even Ibn Taymīyah, the strictest proponent of the Ḥanbalite school, was reported to have concluded that all of the Islamic schools agreed to some degree in revering the Sunnah or the Ḥadīth and in recognizing that the truth was to be found in these sources. Consequently, the schools of Islam were to be revered insofar as they were in agreement with the Sunnah and the Ḥadīth, and that of al-Ashʿarī most of all because of the affinity of his doctrine with that of the Salaf.[50]

The development of orthodoxy in Islam followed a pattern that may be observed in other religious traditions as well: beginning with faith in divine revelation, traditionalism first appears, followed by an opposing current of skeptical rationalism, with orthodoxy finally emerging as the sensible middle way between the two extremes. Makdisi claims that this is the most reasonable explanation of the growth of religious thought. However, this does not automatically imply that Makdisi includes Ashʿarism in this general sketch. He maintains that the Ashʿarites had to work hard to achieve their favorable position in the development of orthodoxy. Makdisi disagrees with those scholars who attribute the triumph of Ashʿarism in eleventh century Baghdad simply to the patronage of Niẓām al-Mulk, arguing that "Ashʿarism's alleged triumph in Baghdad in the eleventh century under the aegis of Niẓām al-Mulk is due to a misunderstanding of history."[51] Instead, Makdisi is more inclined to perceive it as a struggle still in progress, and not yet triumphant.

Since the publication of Ashʿarite sources in the mid-nineteenth

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[49] Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī, *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1990), p.17, as translated by Ignaz Goldziher in his *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 105.

[50] Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," p. 261.

[51] George Makdisi, "Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History," p. 40. Makdisi's criticism seems to be directed toward Ignaz Goldziher who associates that triumph with his designation of Ashʿarism as an "official orthodoxy," due to its being taught at the Niẓamīyah *madrasah*. The latter, for Goldziher, was itself "official" because it was established by Niẓām al-Mulk, an official representative of the Seljuk Sultan, Alp Arselan. Makdisi is against this idea, and disagrees with Goldziher in characterizing any *madrasah* and mosque-school as an "official" institution because it was instituted as a *waqf* belonging to a private enterprise, even that established by the vizier Niẓām al-Mulk. Makdisi, more harshly, rejects Goldziher's idea that *kalām* of any school, was being taught at the Niẓāmīyah. See Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," pp. 253-254.

century, works on the theology of this school have attracted increasing interest on the part of Western scholars concerned with religious orthodoxy in Islam. Their attention was first attracted by al-Shahrastānī's work *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, which was made known through its German translation by Theodor Haarbrucker, in *Religionsparteien und Philosophenschulen*, published in two volumes between 1850 and 1851. Translations of similar works followed suit, such as Ibn ʿAsakir's *Tabyīn Kidhb al-Muftarī fīmā Nusiba ilā Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī*, which appeared in a French translation by Mehren, entitled *Expose de la reforme de l'islamisme* (1879), as well as al-Baghdādī's *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* and his *Uṣūl al-Dīn*. Based on these works, Makdisi unequivocally asserts that "Ashʿarism represented the final stage in the development of Muslim orthodoxy."[52]

B. Sunnism as Orthodox Islam

The majority of Muslims today subscribe to Islam of the *Sunnah*, or Sunnī Islam, which evolved in the nascent Islamic period of Madīnah, under the four Orthodox Caliphs. Adherents to this doctrine are known as orthodox or Sunnī Muslims. According to Caesar E. Farah, they constitute over ninety percent of the entire Muslim community in the world today. All Sunnīs are considered to be one sect, although juridically they subscribe to one of the recognized rites or *madhhabs*: Mālikite, Shāfiʿite, Ḥanafite, and Ḥanbalite. A Sunnī Muslim, however, may pass from one into another rite without ceasing to be an orthodox Muslim.[53]

As the majority of the Muslim *ummah*, Sunnīs are commonly known as the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, to "distinguish themselves from other Islamic sects whose views … constitute *bidaʿ* (sg. *bidʿah*; "innovations"), departures from what community at large holds."[54] In congruence with this idea, A. J. Wensinck insists that the

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[52] Ibid., p. 41. For further discussion on the development of Ashʿarism see Jalāl Muḥammad Mūsā, *Nashʾat al-Ashʿarīyah wa-Taṭawwuruhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1982), of which the first chapter is devoted to discussing the development of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. See also Richard M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994); George Makdisi, "Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History." *Studia Islamica*, vol. 17 (1962), pp. 37-80.

[53] Caesar E. Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observance*, p. 170.

[54] Michael E. Marmura, "Sunni Islam," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World*, vol. 4, p. 140.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah or the "people of the Sunnah and of the Community" are those who refrain from deviating from orthodox dogma and practice. The term is an expression generally used in opposition to the Shīʿah.[55] Historically, however, this opposition was born out of political tensions in the early formative period of Islam. These tensions were expressed in Islamic theological terms and primarily in relation to the problem of *imāmah*, an issue which marks the first instance of a clear distinction in Islamic identity. At this time some Muslims began to label themselves "Sunnī" in contrast to "Shīʿī."[56]

Although Sunnī Islam is usually associated with the Ashʿarite school of theology, there is evidence for the use of this term prior to al-Ashʿarī.[57] This term had been used in connection with those individuals who sought direct references in the text of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah on matters of religion. When they could not find any reference in either source they kept silent, because they did not want to transgress or go beyond the divine sources. Such people were better known as the Ahl al-Ḥadīth, and consisted mainly of the Companions of the Prophet and their Followers. They were also known as al-Salaf (the Predecessors), to be differentiated from the Ahl al-Raʾy, or the people of "reasoned opinion" who tended to rely on intellectual speculation in resolving issues through relying especially on the use of *qiyās* or analogical reasoning.[58]

Their dispute initially began over the problem of divine attributes.

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[55] A.J. Wensinck, "Sunna," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st edition, vol. 7, p. 555.

[56] The split among Muslims in this early period was considered to be the origin of heterodoxy in Islam, which, according to Farah, was based on two historical factors. One resulted from political challenges to the existing authority, which then gave rise to a multitude of sects. The other resulted from attempts to provide rational bases for the principal tenets of faith, which led to the proliferation of philosophical schools and encouraged the use of mystical approach to religion. All of these developments detracted Muslims from the theological, political and social unity of Islam. See Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observance*, p. 170.

[57] Ibn Taymīyah, for instance, asserts that the school of Ahl al-Sunnah is an ancient school, known even before the emergence of the four *madhhabs*. It is the school of the Companions of the Prophet who took their religion directly from him. See, his *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah fī Naqḍ Kalām al-Shīʿah wa'l-Qadarīyah* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Kubrā al-Amīrīyah, 1903), vol. 1, p. 256.

[58] The Ahl al-Ḥadīth rejected the use of analogy, or *qiyās*, in the sense of "any speculative argument which may answer the theological questions of how and why," on the grounds of a dictum that there is no analogy in the Sunnah (*laysa fī'l-Sunnah qiyās*). This prohibition against the use of *qiyās* is especially applicable to matters dealing with God's essence, as dictated by a Ḥadīth saying "Think of (*tafakkarū*)

The Ahl al-Ḥadīth maintained that God has eternal attributes of knowledge, power, life, will, hearing, seeing and speaking, among others, and they did not differentiate between the attributes of essence (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) and the attributes of activities (*ṣifāt fiʿlīyah*). Rather, they insisted that these attributes are clearly mentioned in the *sharīʿah*, and therefore should be simply described as "testified attributes" (*ṣifāt khabarīyah*). They were also unwilling to interpret those attributes. Malik b. Anas, for instance, when asked to explain the meaning of the Qurʾānic verse which describes God as sitting on a throne (*al-ʿarsh*), simply replied: "The sitting is known, but the modality of His sitting is unknown, while belief in it is obligatory, and questioning of it a heresy." This idea was supported by other jurists, including Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī, and their followers.[59]

In addition to the above explanation, the use of the term Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah is also based on some traditions of the Prophet stating that Muslims, after his own age had passed, would split into seventy-three groups, all of which would go to hell except one. The group singled out, according to the Prophet, will consist of those who had constantly observed (the Sunnah of) the Prophet and his Companions. The last phrase, "those who had constantly observed the Sunnah of the Prophet and his Companions," holds a special meaning, because it represents the standard measure by which Muslims could evaluate their possibility of attaining salvation. This statement is further clarified in another Ḥadīth stating that the one group that will gain salvation is the *jamāʿah*, meaning the Community.[60]

God's creation and not of Him (in another version of His essence)." See Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 2, quoting Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Barbahārī, *Kitāb Sharḥ al-Sunnah* (Mecca, 1993), p. 23; and Abū al-Qāsim Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad al-Taymī, *al-Ḥujjah fī Bayān al-Maḥajjah wa-Sharḥ ʿAqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah* (Riyad, 1990), p. 98. It is based on their rejection of the use of *qiyās* that they are known as the upholders of *bilā kayfa* (without questioning how or why) doctrine. For further discussion of the issue of *bilā kayfa* doctrine, see Binyamin Abrahamov, "The *Bi-lā Kayfa* Doctrine and Its Foundations in Islamic Theology." *Arabica: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3 (November 1995), pp. 365-379.

[59] Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* (Cairo: al-Ḥalabī, 1968), vol. 1, p. 93. For further discussion on Malik's position in this issue, see Saʿūd b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Daʿjān, *Manhaj al-Imām Mālik fī Ithbāt al-ʿAqīdah* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymīyah, 1995), especially pp. 134-138.

[60] Quoting al-Shāṭibī's *al-Iʿtiṣām* and al-Lālakāʾī's *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah*, Abrahamov reported that Muslim scholars have five definitions of the *jamāʿah*, namely:

The last term, in turn, also signifies the majority of believers, as indicated by another saying of the Prophet that God will never allow the *ummah* of Muḥammad to agree on an error (*ḍalālah*), and that the hand of God is above the Community. Whoever isolates him- or herself from the Community of Believers will be left alone in hell. An additional comment is given in a Ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Mājah saying that whenever a dispute takes place, the believer should affiliate himself with the majority who preserve the truth and retain their association with the Community (*fa-ʿalayka bi'l-sawād al-aʿzam, maʿa al-ḥaqqi wa'l-jamāʿah*).[61]

Al-Baghdādī (d. 1037) wrote a special treatise devoted to elaborating this issue, entitled *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*. In his introduction al-Baghdādī says: "You have asked me for an explanation of the well-known tradition attributed to the Prophet with regard to the division of the Moslim [sic] Community into seventy-three sects."[62] He then

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(1) the majority of the Muslims; (2) the leading scholars of the Muslim community; (3) Muḥammad's companions; (4) all Muslims when they agree on a certain matter; and (5) all Muslims when they agree on a certain leader. Muslims are enjoined to adhere to the community, based on a tradition traced back to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, saying that the best people are the *Ṣaḥābah;* and those who come after them are inferior and so forth, until lies will diffuse. In such a case, every individual Muslim should have recourse to the *jamāʿah*, since the Devil exists with the individuals. Accordingly, life with the *jamāʿah* will prevent Muslims from believing in lies. This idea is also approved by another Ḥadīth which says that "God protects the community, and whoever leaves the community may be liable to Devil's attack, like a sheep which may be liable to the wolf's attack when it leaves the flock. God unites the people for the purpose of their keeping the right way." Life in *jamāʿah*, after all, will preserve Muslims and protect them from being led astray. See Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology*, pp. 5-6.

[61] The complete text of the Ḥadīths is mentioned in Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Farq bayn al-Firaq wa-Bayān al-Firqat al-Nājiyah minhā* (Egypt: al-Maʿārif, 1910), pp. 4-5, with an extensive discussion on those seventy-three groups in the subsequent pages. For further discussion on the principal beliefs held by the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, see Ibn Taymīyah, *ʿAqīdat Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Firqat al-Nājiyah* and ʿAbd Allāh Ḥajjāj (ed.), *ʿAqīdat al-Firqat al-Nājiyah (Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah)* (Beirut: Dār al-Jayl, 1987). See also Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalūsī, *ʿIlm al-Kalām ʿalā Madhhab Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Thaqafī, 1989); Hibat Allāh b. Ḥasan al-Lālakāʾī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah wa-Ijmāʿ al-Ṣaḥābah wa'l-Tābiʿīn min Baʿdihim,* ed. Aḥmad Saʿd Ḥamdān (Riyad: Dār Tibah, 1992), 9 vols.

[62] Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schism and Sects (al-Fark Bain al-Firak): Being the History of the Various Philosophic Systems Developed in Islam*, translated by Kate Chambers Seelye (New York: AMS Press, 1966), part 1, p. 19. Al-Baghdādī's work has been translated into English by two different translators in separate parts. The first part is translated by Seelye, the second part by Abraham S. Halkin.

tries to determine those who belong to the seventy-three sects, as well as the identity of the one group to be saved. Thoroughly orthodox himself, al-Baghdādī places a special emphasis on this last group, and asserts that it is none other than the orthodox Sunnites.[63] Faced moreover with the fact that Muslims were divided into more than seventy-three sects, (his first count amounted to about a hundred), he had to re-categorize the groups until he reached the exact number of seventy-three. The fact is, therefore, not that the Ḥadīth was invented to justify the number of the sects, but the other way around: since Muḥammad is believed to have said that the Muslims would be divided into seventy-three sects, theologians and heresiographers felt it incumbent upon them "to bring about the fulfillment of this prophecy, and therefore set to work a more or less arbitrary division of the religious system."[64]

Unlike Watt, who seems to have been perplexed by the notion contained in this Ḥadīth and asserts that "it is difficult to see why the founder of a religion should boast about the number of sects into which it is divided," Muslim heresiographers tended to be more comfortable with the message of the text. They were not even bothered by the possibility proposed by some Western scholars that the Ḥadīth might refer to the number of virtues or branches of faith. They maintained that the Ḥadīth was literally true and tried to understand it as a matter of warning—rather than boasting—against disputation in religious matters. The Ḥadīth was believed to imply that, despite the division inherent in the body of the *ummah,* there is always a majority which retains the correct belief and practice of Islam, a group singled out from the others as more likely to attain salvation. Muslims belonging to this group, the *jamāʿah*, will enter paradise insofar as they maintain what has been decreed by the Prophet and his Companions (*mā kāna ʿalā mithli mā ana ʿalayhi al-yawm wa-aṣḥābī*). Disputation or disagreement over the principal matters of religious beliefs (*uṣūl al-ʿaqā'id*) is reprehensible. Dissent, however, is allowed in worldly matters, such as in occupations, professions, and scientific research, which may bring diversity to the quality of life

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[63] See, Kate Chambers Seelye, in her introductory remarks to al-Baghdādī's work cited above, p. 9.

[64] Ibid., p. 1. A summary of the Muslim sects discussed by al-Baghdādī is given by Seelye in a table of sects, on pp. 14-17. See also W. Montgomery Watt, "The Great Community and the Sects," p. 25-27.

which will in turn lead to the betterment of the community.[65]

Al-Baghdādī, in his work cited above, further describes the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah as those who believe in the unity of God and maintain the dogmas of promise and threat (*al-waʿd wa'l-waʿīd*), i.e., reward and retribution. They tread the path of the *Ṣifatīyah* who accept the doctrine that God has eternal attributes, declare themselves free of the taint of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh, tajsīm*) as well as of divesting God of His attributes (*taʿṭīl*), and steer clear of Qadarite and Muʿtazilite views. They affirm the possibility of seeing God [on the Day of Judgement] with human eyes, without falling into the error of *tashbīh* (anthropomorphism). They profess the resurrection from the grave, and recognize that the pool (*al-khawḍ*), the bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), intercession (*al-shafāʿah*) and the forgiveness of sins (except for polytheism) are all true. They acknowledge the imamate of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, and venerate highly the pious Ancestors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) of the *ummah*. They realize the necessity of congregation for prayer on Fridays under the leadership of the Imāms. They also recognize the obligation of extracting the precepts of law from the Qurʾān, the Sunnah and the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the Companions. They urge obedience to the Sultan in whatever does not involve sinfulness. Also included in this group are those who possess a comprehensive knowledge of the Ḥadīth and the Sunnah of the Prophet and can discern sound from fabricated reports, as well as those Sufi ascetics who indulge in learning and abstain from pleasure, resign themselves to fate and are content with the obtainable. Their way of life is to entrust themselves to God, to submit to His command, to feel satisfied with whatever has been bestowed upon them and to refrain from rebellion against Him. Finally, included in this group are those in the general population among whom orthodox practices prevail, as long as they do not follow any innovation or heresy, but only the doctrines approved by the orthodox in relation to the problems of justice and unity, reward and punishment.[66]

From the above presentation it seems clear that the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah exemplified a definite idea of orthodoxy in Islam. From

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[65] See ʿAbd Allāh Hajjāj in his introductory remark to *ʿAqīdat Ahl al-Firqat al-Nājiyah*, p. 4.

[66] Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, pp. 300-303. For the English translation of this part see Abraham S. Halkin, *Moslem Schisms and Sects (al-Fark bain al-Firak) Being the History of the Various Philosophic Systems Developed in Islam* (Tel Aviv: Palestine Publishing Co., 1935), part 2, pp. 159-163.

their standpoint, any school of thought which did not agree with this idea was to be regarded as deviant and as having strayed from the path of God. Moreover, in refering to themselves by the term *ahl al-ḥaqq*, they claimed that their religious doctrine was the only truth worthy of being accepted and followed by Muslims. They also claimed that they consistently maintained the truth, and thus they called themselves *ahl al-istiqāmah*.[67] Finally, the use of the term *jamāʿah* emphasized their historical consciousness of being established with the support of the majority of the *ummah*. In other words, the Sunnites had to maintain the historical continuity of the *ummah* in order to avoid disintegration. It was for the sake of maintaining this historical continuity that the Sunnites were willing to acknowledge the caliphate of al-Maʾmūn, although the latter was more inclined to support Shīʿism and suppress those who opposed Muʿtazilism, like Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the celebrated leading figure of the Salaf school.[68]

C. Orthodox Islam in Indonesia: Attachment to Sunnism

Generally speaking, almost all Indonesian Muslims are Sunnīs, or more precisely, are members of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, the school after which Indonesian Islam is patterned. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that almost all Muslim groups in Indonesia are also affiliated with the teachings of this school. The Nahdlatul Ulama' (Indonesian spelling of the Arabic Nahḍat al-ʿUlamā'—usually abbreviated as NU), for instance, being representative of the Indonesian traditionalist Muslims, explicitly declares in its organizational constitution that it follows the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah as far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned. In addition, they also advocate struggle for the sake of Islam in accordance with one of the four Islamic legal schools, the Ḥanafite, Malikite, Shāfiʿite, and Ḥanbalite.[69] The earliest constitution of this

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[67] For the use of the terms *ahl al-haqq* and *ahl al-itiqāmah* ascribed to Ahl al-Sunnah, see Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿil al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1963), pp. 454-455.

[68] Syafiq A. Mughni, "Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaʿah dan Posisi Teologi Muhammadiyah," in M. Din Syamsuddin (ed.), *Muhammadiyah Kini & Esok* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), pp. 261-262.

[69] The emphasis on this issue was reinforced at the 26th NU General Conference

organization (1930?) stated that NU was established with the aim of upholding the teachings of the four *madhhabs* and to undertake all endeavors for the advantage of Islam. The constitution also insisted that it was necessary to examine all books which would be used for religious education to assure that they were entirely in agreement with the teachings of the Ahl al-Sunnah, and were not the books of heretics.[70] The Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, although less explicit, in its *Tarjīḥ* decisions also adopts this position, stating therein that decisions on the principles of belief are to be based on the precepts of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah.[71]

For NU, the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah are very central. NU members claim that attachment to these doctrines is a part of their religious identity. NU was primarily established in order to uphold this school of thought among Indonesian Muslims.

(*Muktamar*) in Semarang (1979), in which it was stated that NU aims to uphold the *sharīʿah* of Islam according to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, that is to follow the four recognized Islamic schools of law; and to implement the teachings of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah in the daily life of the community. Choirul Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Nahdlatul Ulama'*(Sala: Jatayu, 1985), p. 135.

[70] M. Ali Haidar, *Nahdatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia: Pendekatan Fikih dalam Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1994), p. 69, as quoted from *Statuten Perkoempoelan Nahdlatoel Oelama*, Rechts persoon, 6 February 1930, no. 1x, article 2. More precisely (in its old Indonesian spelling): "Adapoen maksoed perkoempoelan ini jaitoe memegang tegoeh salah satoe dari mazhabnja Imam empat jaitoe Imam Moehammad bin Idris asj-Sjafi'i, Imam Malik bin Anas, Imam Aboe Hanifah An-Noe'man, ataoe Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, dan mengerdjakan apa sadja jang mendjadikan kemaslahatan agama Islam……. Memeriksa kitab-kitab sebeloemnja dipakai oentoek mengadjar, soepaja diketahoei apakah itoe daripada kitab-kitab Ahli Soennah wal Djama'ah ataoe kitab-kitab Ahli Bid'ah." The constitution has witnessed some changes from time to time, such as in 1961 and 1979, but remains in the framework of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah in its operation.

[71] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (Yogyakarta: PP. Muhammadiyah, n.d.), p. 20. Unlike the NU, Muhammadiyah, in this *tarjīḥ* decision, uses the term *ahl al-ḥaqq wa'l-sunnah* instead of *ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jamāʿah*. The term proposed by Muhammadiyah is similar to the one mentioned in al-Ashʿarī's work *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah*, pp. 13 and 17. *Tarjih* is a departmental institution in the Muhammadiyah organization consisting of some scholars and experts, especially in Islamic jurisprudence, whose duty is to consider legal opinions on religious matters. This and other departments have been established in order to translate the objectives of the Muhammadiyah into reality. Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of NU, observes that, like Persis, the Muhammadiyah accepts only Ashʿarite scholasticism as its theological foundation for its "Sunnism." This is in contrast with NU, according to Wahid, since the latter holds the integrated aspects of all the Islamic sciences, encompassing *tawhīd*, *fiqh* and *taṣawwuf*, as the sufficient means for achieving both worldly and otherworldly happiness. See, Abdurrahman Wahid, "Nahdlatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia Dewasa Ini," in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds.), *Tradisi dan Kebangkitan Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989), p. 198.

Choirul Anam, in his work on the growth and development of NU, emphasizes this idea. He writes that among the considerations that led to the founding of this organization in 1926 was a desire to respond to the demands of traditionalist Muslims to propagate the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah in Indonesia.[72] It is not surprising, therefore, to see that NU members are more concerned with this issue than those belonging to other Indonesian Muslim groups. They constantly stress their affiliation with this school of Islam, and tend to claim that it is only their group that has an authentic attachment to it. For them, the true Islam is that of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, although they do retain their own interpretation of this assertion.[73]

Anam's discussion begins with a general survey of the early development of Islamic expansion in Indonesia [Java?] through the works of the *walis*. Islam was promoted by the Nine Saints (Wali Songo) who applied different approaches to their propagation (*daʿwah*) of Islam. Their application of different approaches was due to their varied perceptions of the nature of the Indonesian people at the time. Anam examines two different approaches: one undertaken by Sunan Ampel and Sunan Giri on the one hand, and that undertaken by Sunan Kalijaga on the other. According to the first two *walis*, Islam had to be introduced directly in its pure and original form, free from any element of heresy and syncretism. With this understanding, indigenous customs would not be tolerated. All types of obscurantism, superstition, idolatry and heresy were to be suppressed without hesitation. According to Sunan Kalijaga, however, who once lived in the rural region of the Javanese hinterland and was culturally close

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[72] Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Nahdlatul Ulama'*, pp. 35 ff.

[73] Many works have been written by NU members on this matter, including Abdurrahman Wahid, "Kerangka Pengembangan Doktrin Ahlus-sunnah wal Jama'ah (ASWAJA)," in his *Muslim di Tengah Pergumulan* (Jakarta: Leppenas, 1981), pp. 35-45; K.H. Bisyri Musthafa, *Risalah Ahlussunnah wal-Djamaʿah* (Kudus: Al-Ibriz, 1967); Saifuddin Zuhri, *Menghidupkan Nilai-nilai Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah dalam Praktek* (Jakarta: Pucuk Pimpinan IPNU, 1976); H.M. Hasjim Latief, *Nahdlatul Ulama' Penegak Panji Ahlus-sunnah Wal-jamaah* (Surabaya: Pengurus NU Wilayah Jawa Timur, 1979); H. Amin Ali, *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah dan Usnsur-unsur Pokok Ajarannya* (Semarang: Wicaksana, 1980); Rs. Abd. Aziz, *Konsepsi Ahlussunnah wal-Jamaah dalam Bidang Aqidah dan Syari'ah* (Pekalongan: Bahagia, 1990); Thoha Hamim, "Faham Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah: Proses Pembentukan dan Tantangannya." *Aula*, vol. 19, no. 2 (February 1997), pp. 75-80; and vol. 19, no. 3 (March 1997), pp. 58-62; Siradjuddin Abbas, *I'tiqad Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1997).

to the Javanese court, the above approach was inappropriate. He maintained that the propagation of Islam in areas where the people were overwhelmed with Hindu-Buddhist traditions could not be undertaken abruptly against local culture. Instead, it should be carried out through persuasion featuring a broad tolerance of local customs. Kalijaga went even further by trying to accommodate or revive local culture. He argued that through this policy of tolerance he could attract even more new converts, who, once they had accepted Islam, could be led toward purer teachings, slowly but surely. By employing this accommodative approach and avoiding too drastic a contrast with the local culture, he is believed to have been successful in overcoming many of the obvious challenges presented by mass conversion.[74]

Anam suggests that Sunan Kalijaga's approach is the one that has been adopted by NU, and that it is frequently applied by the *'ulamā'* who teach at *pesantrens*. In their propagation of Islam, in fact, the *'ulamā'* associated with NU usually appear more tolerant of certain deviations from "orthodox" Islam, resulting from the influence of indigenous customs. They have even argued that such local culture can be used as a vehicle for spreading Islam more extensively. This tendency is clearly manifested in several events relating to local customs and adapted to religious ceremonies, such as marriage, circumcision, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, and certain ceremonies that commemorate a deceased person on the third, seventh, hundredth, and thousandth days after his or her death. All these ceremonies are still very popular among the traditionalists, including NU members.[75]

This tendency was earnestly criticized by the modernist Muslim

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[74] Kalijaga is believed to be a *wali* who successfully created the sacred elements of Javanese arts and culture. As an exemplary hero, Kalijaga is regarded as having brought Java from the shadow-play world of "Hindu times" to the scriptural one of "Islamic times." To contemporary Javanese, he remains an extremely vivid figure in the popular mind as one of a long series of "cultural renewers" who have brought the entire society forward into a new phase of spiritual existence. For a brief biography of his life, see Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 25-29. For his role in Islamic propagation, see Agus Sunyoto, *Sejarah Perjuangan Sunan Ampel: Taktik dan Strategi Dakwah Islam di Jawa Abad 14-15* (Surabaya: LPLI-Sunan Ampel, n.d.), especially pp. 79-93. See also Solichin Salam, *Wali Sanga dalam Perspektif Sejarah* (Jakarta: Kuning Mas, 1989), pp. 38-39. Each *wali* was ascribed the designation of *Sunan*, derived from *"susuhunan,"* a royal title in the Javanese courts, especially in Surakarta. See Agus Sunyoto, p. 80.

[75] Agus Sunyoto also mentions that some of the traditions maintained by NU members may have their origin from Shi'ite traditions initially introduced by Syekh

movement in Indonesia, especially by the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Persis),[76] the two leading organizations promoting Islamic reform in Indonesia. Even prior to the establishment of these organizations in 1912 and 1923, respectively, the idea of reform had influenced some Indonesian leaders who had gone to Mecca for pilgrimage, as early as the end of the nineteenth century. Since more and more people could perform pilgrimage, particularly due to easier transportation facilitated by the Dutch administration, the idea of reform steadily grew and flourished and was finally embodied in new movements like those of the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis. They encouraged Indonesian Muslims to revive their religious understanding through direct reference to the principal sources of Islamic doctrine, the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, and to avoid all elements of heresy, superstition, and idolatry. Anam, however, never specifically mentions that the establishment of NU was in fact a reactionary measure against the reform movement initiated by the Muhammadiyah and Persis. He, instead, asserts that NU was established in response to the general Islamic reform occurring throughout the Muslim world, particularly that promoted by the Wahhābī movement in the Arabian peninsula.[77]

But Achmad Farichin Chumaidy, writing his MA thesis in 1976 on the *Jamʿīyah* Nahdlatul Ulamaʾ, expresses a different view. He emphasizes that in addition to the growth of the Wahhābī movement in the Ḥijāz, the establishment of NU should also be seen in the light of the lengthy conflicts and disputes between the traditionalist and reformist groups. The traditionalists realized that their split with the reformists would never be healed. They also felt that the latter's main attack, focussed on undermining the NU's teaching concerning *madhhab*, was growing more effective and fierce. On the other hand,

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Siti Jenar in the 15th century. Siti Jenar, whose original name was ʿAbd al-Jalīl, was supposed to have come from Persia, and was contemporaneous with Sunan Kalijaga. Like Kalijaga, Siti Jenar tended to incorporate local customs into Islamic practices, and promoted some Shi'ite elements in Javanese Islam. See ibid., pp. 91-93. For further discussion on Seh Siti Jenar, see D.A. Rinkes, *Nine Saints of Java*, translated by H.M. Froger (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1996), pp. 15-48.

[76] With regard to the criticism by the Persis of the NU concerning these practices, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1970), pp. 69-83.

[77] Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan NU*, p. 49.

the reformist groups, in order to achieve their ideals and unify their followers, established formal organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, and al-Irsyad. Stimulated by the examples set by their opponents, Chumaidy explains, the traditionalists also decided to establish an association as a forum for discussing religious matters and a channel for spreading *madhhab* teachings among Indonesian Muslims. Chumaidy supports this claim with a statement made by K.H. Masykur, one of the NU leaders, who in justifying the NU's withdrawal from the Masyumi, the sole political party open to Indonesian Muslims, in 1952, said: "The organization of the *Nahdlatul Ulama'* was created in reaction to the emergence of the movement whose desire was to abolish the *madhhab* school in Indonesia, as well as in Ḥijāz where Ibn Sa'ūd wrested the power."[78] In line with this idea, Sidney Jones also maintains that the establishment of NU was meant as a medium for the traditionalist Javanese Muslims to oppose ʿAbduh-influenced Muslim reformism.[79]

Nevertheless, Indonesian *ʿulamā'* were worried that the advancement of the Wahhābī movement under the patronage of the Saʿūd dynasty would bring about unfavorable changes in the performance of religious rites in the Ḥijāz. They heard that the Wahhābīs, through their purification campaign, had abolished the *madhhab* system, forbidden people to visit the tombs of Muslim heroes (including that of the Prophet) and prohibited Muslims from conducting pilgrimage rituals based on *madhhab* principles, among other things. They felt even more threatened by the rumor that the lives of those who continued to subscribe to the *madhhab* system would be endangered there. All these issues aroused a great anxiety among the traditionalist *ʿulamā'* in Indonesia, who considered the adoption of the *madhhab* system essential for performing religious duties.[80] Accordingly, they convened

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[78] Achmad Farichin Chumaidy, "The Jamʿiyah Nahdlatul Ulama': Its Rise and Early Development (1926-1945)." (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1976), pp. 35, 41. The direct quotation is based on *Verslag Lengkap Muktamar N.U. ke 19 di Palembang* (Jakarta: Pengurus Besar N.U. Bagian Da'wah, 1952), p. 1.

[79] Sidney Jones, "The Contraction and Expansion of the '*Umat*' and the Role of the Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia." *Indonesia*, vol. 38 (October 1984), p 9. For the most recent discussion on the emergence of NU, see, M. Ali Haidar, *Nahdatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia*, pp. 38-62.

[80] Siradjuddin Abbas, one of the traditionalist *ʿulamā'*, points out a number of practices which were very common among the traditionalists but rejected by the Wahhābī proponents. Abbas came to Mecca for pilgrimage for the first time in January 1927, two years after the Wahhābīs occupied the Ḥijāz. He stayed there for

to create a committee whose members could be sent as delegates to King Saʿūd in the Ḥijāz demanding his guarantee of freedom to adopt a *madhhab* and to practice religious rituals according to *madhhab* doctrines. They also requested that traditional religious practices, like the erection of tombs on graves and the reading of certain prayers compiled in the *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, be respected.[81] The committee, called the Ḥijāz Committee, was set up in January 1926. Once the formation of the committee was complete, however, the question arose regarding to whom the committee would be responsible. Finally it was agreed that the committee would answer to a body of *'ulamā'* who had come together to form a movement, known as the "Nahdlatul Ulama," or "Resurgence of the *'Ulama'*." The foundation of the Ḥijāz Committee was coincided with the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama'.[82]

The establishment of NU was evidently meant to consolidate the Indonesian traditionalist *'ulamā'* who were concerned to maintain the *madhhab* institution as a legitimate way to understand as well as to practice religion. K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, for instance, the founding father and the great leader (*al-ra'īs al-akbar*) of NU, vigorously emphasized the necessity of following a *madhhab*. In his celebrated speech known as *Qanun Asasi Nahdlatul Ulama'*, he reminds Muslims in Indonesia that there would be a great benefit in adopting the four *madhhabs*, and serious evil in abandoning them. He argues that in order to be able to embrace religion correctly, Muslims must follow their predecessors. This is what had happened with the second

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about seven years, during which he witnessed many of changes imposed by them in the field of religious practices. In his book *I'tiqad Ahlussunnah Wal-Jamaʿah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1997), first published in 1969, he defends those practices and claims that Wahhābī reform is against the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. For his discussion on the Wahhābīs and their beliefs see pp. 270-332. The Wahhābīs are only one among the twelve groups discussed by Abbas as opposing the doctrines of Ahl al-Sunnah. It is unsurprising, therefore, to see Abbas categorizing the Wahhābīs and Ibn Taymīyah in the same class as Baha'ī, Khawārij, Shiʿite, and Muʿtazilite. This arbitrary classification is not adopted by Abbas alone, but also followed by some traditionalist writers, such as Rs. Abd. Aziz and H. Amin Ali. This seems to have been a part of their attempt to discover the seventy-two groups out of seventy-three mentioned in the Ḥadīth concerning the division of Muslims, and to emphasize that the only group eligible for salvation was their group, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah.

[81] For this work, see Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Jazūlī, *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt wa-Shawāriq al-Anwār fī Dhikr al-Ṣalāt 'alā al-Nabīy al-Mukhtār* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1987).

[82] Choirul Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan NU,* p. 49-55.

generation of early Muslims (*Tābiʿīn*) who took their religion entirely from their predecessors; and likewise with the subsequent generation, the *Tābiʿ al-Tābiʿīn*. Hasyim Asyʿari bases his argument on the fact that the intellect has approved following a *madhhab* as a successful means of practicing Islam, adding that religion cannot be known without transmission. Therefore, it is necessary for Muslims to be cognizant of the schools of the past and not deviate from their decisions, since otherwise they would destroy the consensus reached by the *ʿulamāʾ* on religious matters. For Asyʾari, subscription to the *madhhab*s also implies the fulfillment of the prophetic ordinance that Muslims should associate themselves with the majority (*al-sawād al-aʿẓam*). But since other righteous *madhhabs* had disappeared due to a lack of support from their adherents, following the majority of the *ummah* as ordained by the Prophet means subscribing to one of the four authoritative *madhhabs* of Sunnī law: Ḥanafite, Malikite, Shāfiʿite, and Ḥanbalite. He asserts that the four *madhhabs* are the only legitimate representatives of the majority of the *ummah*.[83] Asyʾari also emphasizes the necessity of *taqlīd* or unquestioning acceptance and adoption of doctrines laid down by the leaders of the *madhhab*s.[84]

It is important that for NU members, attachment to the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah waʾl-Jamāʿah—with their own peculiar way of interpretation—characterizes their religious identification. Their concept of a devout Muslim, in line with that attachment, means one who holds unswervingly the principles laid down by the *madhab* leaders in jurisprudence, by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in theology, and by Abū Qāsim al-Junayd (and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī) in Sufism.[85] For them, following one of the four *madhhabs* is legitimate and should be supported, because the religious principles formulated by the *madhhab* leaders are correctly based on

[83] In line with this idea, Makdisi reveals that up to the 3rd/9th century, there were about five hundred personal schools of Islamic law. But since then, these schools continually decreased in number until only four Sunni schools were left which have survived down to our time. In the 7th/13th century these four schools began to crystallize, when only four *qāḍīs* were appointed in Cairo, while the rest were all disavowed. See George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), p. 2.

[84] K.H. Hasyim Asyʾari, *Qanun Asasi Nahdlatul Ulama'* (Kudus: Menara, 1969), pp. 52-60.

[85] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyahi* (Jakarta: LP3ES), 1985), p. 149. These principles have been officially reinforced in one of the decisions resulting from the 27th Summit Conference (*Muktamar*) of NU in 1984. See *Nahdlatul Ulama Kembali ke Khittah 1926* (Bandung: Risalah, 1985), p. 118.

the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Their '*ulamā*' also maintain that certain religious practices like *tahlilan, tawassul, slametan* or giving charity in the interests of the deceased are divinely vindicated, although they cannot find a definite legal basis justifying any of these traditions. They simply claim that these traditions must have been established on the basis of the practices of the Companions which were accepted and approved by the Prophet.[86]

D. The Muhammadiyah and the Ahl al-Sunnah

The Muhammadiyah never claimed any special attachment to the doctrine of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, except in the Tarjih decision mentioned earlier. The Muhammadiyah movement, since its establishment in 1912, has always been most concerned with promoting the necessity of *tajdīd*, or renewal, in Indonesian Islam. However, when the organization was accused by other Muslim groups in the country of being beyond the bounds of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah, one of its prominent figures, Djarnawi Hadikusuma, vehemently denied the accusation. In response, he wrote a small treatise entitled *Muhammadijah Ahlu Sunnah wal Djama'ah?* in which he defends the Muhammadiyah's position against that accusation. This small treatise, consisting of only thirty-six pages, was originally meant to be supplementary material for the Muhammadiyah's proselytizers (*muballigh*), designed to allow them to respond correctly to questions as to whether or not the Muhammadiyah belonged to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah or followed the *madhhab*.[87] However, this treatise, which is one of only a few works on the issue written by Muhammadiyah writers, devotes but a cursory discussion to the Muhammadiyah's attitude toward the Ahl al-Sunnah. It might indeed be argued that, for the Muhammadiyah, the attachment to the Ahl al-Sunnah is not a great issue—unlike for NU and other traditionalist associations—thus explaining why it has not attracted much attention from its scholars.

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[86] Rs. Abd. Aziz, *Konsepsi Ahlussunnah wal-Jamaah dalam Bidang Aqidah dan Syari'ah* (Pekalongan: Bahagia, 1990), p. 82.

[87] Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Muhammadijah Ahlu Sunnah wal Djama'ah?* (Yogyakarta: Siaran, n.d.), p. 2. Later this treatise was reprinted together with another work of Hadikusuma, *Bid'ah-Khurafat;* and are now published as one book entitled *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, Bida'ah, Khurafat* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1996).

Hadikusuma begins his discussion by explaining the rhetoric of those who unjustly assert that the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah must adhere to the four *madhhabs* in jurisprudence, and that Indonesia is home to the Shāfiʿite *madhhab*. They also say that those who do not follow a *madhhab* are beyond the pale of the Ahl al-Sunnah and will go astray, and consequently end up in hell. According to Hadikusuma, this accusation was directed specifically at the Muhammadiyah, since, for those who claimed to be *madhhab* followers, the Muhammadiyah has failed to meet this condition. "How poor," says Hadikusuma ironically, "are those people who do not follow the *madhhab*; how sad are those who are excluded from the pale of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, disregarding the fact that their confession of belief, their *tawḥīd*, their prayers, their Prophet and their Qur'ān are all the same [as those held by their critics]."[88]

Hadikusuma is right in that there are more similarities between the modernists and the traditionalists than there are differences. In most of their beliefs and practices, the two camps share the same fundamental concepts. They only differ (and used to dispute against each other) over supplementary aspects of doctrine, called *furūʿīyah*. For instance, whereas NU members prefer to pray *tarāwīḥ* during the nights of Ramaḍān with twenty *rakaʿāts*, Muhammadiyah partisans have only eight. And whereas the former have two *adhāns* for Friday congregational prayers, the latter have but one only. Likewise, while the traditionalists usually perform their *ʿĪd al-Fiṭr* and *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā* prayers in mosques, the modernists insist that they should perform them in the open, such as in public squares. But the fact that each party performs *tarāwīḥ*, Friday prayers, *ʿĪd al-Fiṭr* and *ʿĪd al-Adḥā* prayers (and other religious obligations) persistently is more significant as a token of their similarity as upholders of orthodox beliefs and practices.

Nevertheless, in his defense of the Muhammadiyah's position, Hadikusuma tries to identify those who could correctly claim themselves as the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah. "It is not a difficult matter," Hadikusuma says,

> to know those who could be correctly considered part of the school of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, since it is clear enough from the meaning indicated by the word: that the Ahl al-Sunnah are those who follow the Traditions of the Prophet and of the Community of his

[88] Ibid., p. 23.

> Companions, that is to follow their principles of belief and practice, and to struggle for the glory of Islam and its *ummah*.[89]

Hadikusuma bases his argument on the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse:

> The vanguard (of Islam)—the first of those who forsook (their homes) [*al-Muhājirūn*] and of those who gave them aid [*al-Anṣār*], and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds—well pleased is Allah with them, and as are they with Him. For them hath He prepared gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme felicity (9:100).

He also refers to the Ḥadīth which has been time and again cited, that Muslims would split into seventy-three groups, and that the only one to be saved from hellfire would consist of those who had strictly upheld the traditions of the Prophet and his Companions.[90] The opening phrase *al-sābiqūn al-awwalūn* (the vanguard of Islam) *min al-muhājirīn wa'l-anṣār* in the above Qur'ānic verse is congruent with the closing phrase of the Ḥadīth *mā ana ʿalayhi wa-aṣḥābī*. They clearly indicate that the exemplary period from which the ideal sources of the pure doctrines of Islam should be derived is that of the first generation of the Muslim community, that is the era of the Prophet's Companions, *ʿaṣr al-ṣaḥābah*. Based on these verses and the Ḥadīth as well, Muhammadiyah doctrine asserts that the term *salaf* is to be confined to that period of the Companions only, and not extended to the two succeeding generations, i.e., the *Tābiʿīn* and the *Atbāʿ al-Tābiʿīn*.[91]

The Muhammadiyah, Hadikusuma asserts, is an Islamic movement which bases all its religious and social activism (*amal ibadah,* Arabic: *ʿamal wa-ʿibādah*) and its worldview on the Book of God and the traditions of the Prophet as narrated in the sound Ḥadīths. The Muhammadiyah also follows (*ittibāʿ*) the struggle of the Prophet in propagating Islam and promoting the common well-being of the community. The Muhammadiyah, according to Hadikusuma, has clearly translated all these ideal concepts into real activities; namely, enhancing religious propagation (*daʿwah*), and founding religious schools, hospitals, orphanages, and mosques. Therefore, since the

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[89] Ibid., p. 25.
[90] Ibid., pp. 25-26.
[91] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah, Cita Tajdid & Realitas Sosial* (Jakarta: IKIP Muhammadiyah Press, 1995), pp. 2-3.

Muhammadiyah refers all religious matters to God and His Prophet, it is undoubtedly proven that the Muhammadiyah belongs to the Ahl al-Sunnah.[92] Even the renewal (*tajdīd*) promoted by the Muhammadiyah, according to his point of view, is actually devoted to bringing Indonesian Muslims back to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah.[93] Amazingly, Hadikusuma wants to expand this concept of the Ahl al-Sunnah also to include Muʿtazilism. He argues that Muʿtazilism should not necessarily be excluded from the Ahl al-Sunnah, because the time the sect emerged, the term Ahl al-Sunnah had not yet been invented. He seems to be referring to the event in which Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131H) was cast out of the circle of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 116H), because he maintained a different position from that held by the latter concerning the status of the grave sinner. Hadikusuma concludes that the term Muʿtazilah is older than that of Ahl al-Sunnah and thus cannot be excluded from the latter.[94]

Hadikusuma further enumerates some of the tenets held by the Muʿtazilites and interprets them in a way that justifies reformist ideas. An interesting example is the belief that the Qurʾān is not eternal. To a certain degree, Hadikusuma seems to be in agreement with this belief, but with his own particular interpretation. He maintains that believing that the Qurʾān is not eternal signifies that the Qurʾān, at some time in the future, may perish, in the sense that nobody will understand its meaning or that no one will observe its doctrines, even though its material form as scripture or a *muṣḥaf* may fill shelves and cupboards everywhere. The non-eternity of the Qurʾān, then, can be understood as signifying either that there will come a day when no one remembers the text and that it is no longer available

[92] According to Nurcholish Madjid, although Muhammadiyah is generally perceived by NU as not firmly attached to the Ahl al-Sunnah, in reality, it is, to a greater extent, deeply committed to Sunnism. In its doctrinal belief Muhammadiyah is also a devout adherent of Ashʾarism, without adopting a critical stance like the modernist thinkers such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh, or even like some reformists such as Ibn Taymīyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. See his *Islam, Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1992), p. 270. This is also in line with the assertion made by M. Yunan Yusuf that with its specific appellation of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah as mentioned in the book of *Tarjih*, the theological concept upheld by Muhammadiyah is in reality congruent with that maintained by the *Salaf* who were assured of their salvation. Therefore it is unfair to accuse Muhammadiyah of being excluded from the pale of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. See M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah, Cita Tajdid*, p. 27.

[93] Hadikusuma, *Muhammadiyah Ahlu Sunnah*, p. 30.

[94] Ibid., p. 31.

in the form of a *muṣḥaf*. It may also signify that there are still many people who can memorize it and maintain the body of scripture, but no one understands its meaning nor knows how to practice its teachings.[95] Realizing this problem, the Muhammadiyah was among the first groups in Indonesia to promote the necessity of translating the Qur'ān and delivering the Friday sermon in vernacular languages.[96]

It is not clear whether or not Djarnawi Hadikusuma's interpretation of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah as such represents the "official" position upheld by the Muhammadiyah.[97] To a certain extent, however, the issue may be considered a token of the existing "internal pluralism" within the Muhammadiyah. Every individual member of the Muhammadiyah is allowed to examine (even if profoundly) the classical issues of *kalām*, such as the problem of God's attributes. But as an institution, the Muhammadiyah does not concern itself with such personal explorations.[98] Indeed, the first part of Hadikusuma's treatise is filled with an elaboration of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, among the most controversial issues in Islamic thought and ones which usually draw both traditionalists and modernists into heated debate. While the traditionalists hold that *taqlīd* is permissible or even obligatory, the modernists, on the contrary, maintain that it is forbidden. According to the latter, Muslims should abandon *taqlīd* and are obliged to exercise *ijtihād*. The gate of *ijtihād* is therefore never closed, since there are still many issues requiring that Muslims carry out *ijtihād* in order to arrive at appropriate solutions. Hadikusuma cites many statements by *madhhab* leaders indicating that they do not

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[95] Ibid., p. 34.

[96] Hadikusuma, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, Bid'ah, Khurafat*, p. 16; James L. Peacock, *Indonesia: An Anthropological Perspective*, p. 68.

[97] In my field research in Indonesia one of my informants from the Muhammadiyah told me that not every individual opinion presented by Muhammadiyah figures could be considered as an official opinion of the organization. The Muhammadiyah, as an institution, is very careful in producing crucial religious statements and usually takes several steps to come to a unanimous decision, such as dealing with the issue of Mu'tazilism. However, individually, its members or figures can freely express their opinions, based on their capability, for which then they alone are responsible. It raises further consequences in that only a few of some valuable treatises made by its leaders (especially of that early period), survive up to the present time. Interview with Syamsul Anwar, vice chairman of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah's Majlis Tarjih, Yogyakarta, February 9th, 1999.

[98] M. Amin Abdullah, "Religiositas Kebudayaan: Sumbangan Muhammadiyah dalam Pembangunan Bangsa," in *Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah ke-43 Beserta Makalah Prasarannya* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 1995), p. 108.

intend for Muslims to blindly accept their juridical decisions and that it is possible for them to engage in their own *ijtihād*. More precisely, Hadikusuma asserts that *taqlīd* is forbidden and that every Muslim has to find the proof (*dalīl*) justifying a given religious practice. However, if a Muslim cannot practice *ijtihād* himself, he must follow the decision of the *imām* with an obligation to understand the references he used from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as a proof or *dalīl*. This practice, according to Hadikusuma, is called *ittibā'*. Similarly, an *'ālim* or a teacher who teaches a religious law must elaborate his proofs so that Muslims who rely on him can engage in *ittibā'* instead of *taqlīd*.[99]

Like Hadikusuma, Moenawar Chalil (1908-1961), who was once the head of the Majlis 'Ulamā' of Persatuan Islam (Persis) and a member of the Majlis Tarjih of the Muhammadiyah, appealed to the supreme authority of the Qur'ān, to the example of Muḥammad and to the way the Muslim community was organized in his own time. Chalil thought it his duty to criticize the traditionalists' practice of *taqlīd* and their adherence to the *madhhab*s, insisting on the fact that the gate of *ijtihād* was still open and urged the implementation of *ittibā'*. He maintained that Islam could be a religion for all mankind, in all times, so long as a creative interpretation of its primary sources of doctrines, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, were conducted by the means of *ijtihād*.[100] Chalil discusses his conception of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah in his work *Kembali Kepada AlQur-an dan As-Sunnah*, first published in 1956. Like Hadikusuma, he rejects the NU's claim that the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah are those who associate them-selves with the *madhhab*. More specifically, he disagrees with the formulation put forward by the traditionalists that the people of the Ahl al-Sunnah are the followers of the Shāfi'ites in religious practice and of the Ash'arites in belief. He even accuses them of following an Ahl al-Sunnah of their own construction, and not the pristine version.[101]

As the Muhammadiyah appears to be largely unconcerned over the question of whether or not it belongs to the school of the Ahl al-Sunnah, it is no surprise to find that this issue is seldom addressed

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[99] Hadikusuma, *Muhammadijah Ahlu Sunnah*, p. 17.

[100] Thoha Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar (1908-1961)." (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 1996), p. 3.

[101] K.H. Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada AlQur-an dan As-Sunnah: Suatu Muqaddimah bagi Himpunan Hadis-hadis Pilihan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), p. 386.

by its scholars. The most significant aspect of this problem is the assertion that the movement does not bind itself to any particular *madhhab* of Islamic jurisprudence. The Muhammadiyah claims that this position is more appropriate, in view of the fact that it is quite possible for modern Muslims to learn and adopt several currents of thought at the same time. It is even more beneficial, since, by freeing themselves from attachment to a particular *madhhab*, the followers of the Muhammadiyah can pursue a further development of current tendencies in Muslim thought which are growing more pluralistic. Hence they gain more freedom to broaden their minds without being psychologically constrained by a fear of violating the doctrine of a particular *madhhab*. In contrast to the NU, the Muhammadiyah is not obsessed with the need to be encompassed within the sphere of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, although its constitution mentions that the theological principles they have adopted are in line with this school. Accordingly, the Muhammadiyah is able to claim fairly that it is a "non-sectarian" movement,[102] since it refers directly to the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, and not to a certain school of thought established by Muslim scholars at a particular point in Islamic history.

The above exposition by Syafiq A. Mughni exemplifies how the present Muhammadiyah scholars perceive the issue of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah in the Indonesian context. Mughni explains further that whereas the formation of the Ahl al-Sunnah encountered great obstacles ten centuries ago, today these obstacles have grown even more complex. He argues that to classify the current Muslim communities, especially those in Indonesia, on the basis of the theological affiliations of the Middle Ages, is incongruent. There are many reasons for justifying this belief. *First*, intellectually speaking, there is no longer any polemic over strictly theological issues, such as that of God's attributes. The debate over this issue was settled in the works of Muslim theologians of the Middle Ages, so that today a discussion of this sort would have no effect on the quality of a Muslim's belief. *Second*, there is no longer any state in the Islamic world—except, perhaps, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which explicitly proclaim their association with Ḥanbalism and Shiʿism respectively—which has a special interest in defending a certain Islamic theologi-

[102] Syafiq A. Mughni, "Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaʿah dan Posisi Teologi Muhammadiyah," p. 274.

cal school. Therefore, the adoption of a particular *madhhab* will not influence the degree of a person's loyalty to the state. *Third*, the Muslim world is now more open to the outside world, and the flow of ideas either from within or without is more widely accepted by and more easily accessible to Muslims. This has allowed them to decide which school of thought they consider the most appropriate to their needs, without having to consider the debates that took place over ten centuries ago. The only practical way to decide on which belief to follow is simply to refer to the original sources of doctrine, the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, without being bothered over the question of whether one's decision is in accordance with Mu'tazilite or Ash'arite principles, or otherwise. The problem is perhaps more relevant though when one is dealing with the conflict between the Sunnite and the Shī'ite perspectives. Due to their subtle but different theological stances, the two parties have each developed a different historical consciousness.[103]

The reform movement promulgated by the Muhammadiyah is designed to restore the teachings of Islam in their pure and original forms as manifested in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, free of any element of heresy or superstition, and as a true reflection of the principal characteristics of Islam. The Muhammadiyah looks at this reform as a means to reconstruct religious life in the form of pristine Islam. In this way the Muhammadiyah becomes the vindicator of Islamic precepts and all forms of ritual practice against deviant and heretical tendencies. Reform or *tajdīd* of this type is accordingly called "purification."[104] On the other hand, since Islam encompasses at the same time universal values, the *tajdīd* of the Muhammadiyah also refers to the implementation of Islamic teachings in accordance with the demands of the developments of the modern age. In this case,

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[103] Ibid., pp. 272-273.

[104] An interesting study on religious "purification" of Indonesian Islam has been provided by Joseph Tamney. In his article, "Modernization and Religious Purification: Islam in Indonesia," Tamney asserts that in a general sense "purification" is simply the opposite of syncretism. In this sense, purification is "the elimination of religious elements (beliefs, rites, structures) originating in a religious tradition other than one's own." But in its specific meaning, "purification" can be understood as separating universal religion from folk religion, or, in its Indonesian context, separation of Islam from folk practices. Tamney further asserts that modernization would support purification if the more educated, urbanized people were inclined to de-emphasize folk traditions that are incongruent with their modern life style. See, Joseph Tamney, "Modernization and Religious Purification: Islam in Indonesia." *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 22, no. 2 (December 1980), p. 208.

however, it is limited in its scope to the non-ritual aspects of Islamic teaching, i.e., those areas dealing with social and humanitarian issues not strictly regulated by Islam but relinquished to human reasoning. *Tajdīd* of this type is called "renewal."[105] In regard to the first form of *tajdīd*, the Muhammadiyah realizes that Muslims have always tended to deviate slightly from the original teachings of Islam. This does not mean that Islamic teaching is defective, however, since Muslims believe that Islam as a religion is complete and perfect. Nevertheless, deviation might occur in implementing the true doctrines of the faith, due to the influence of local culture or a lack of understanding on the part of Muslims of true belief.[106] On the other hand, the Muhammadiyah believes that Islam as a religion is perfectly suited to modern society. Islam, in other words, does not contradict modernism and is applicable to modern life. This is because Islam has laid down its principal teachings in accordance with the development of mankind.[107]

In his 1957 thesis on the Muhammadiyah, Abdu'l Muʿti Ali notes that the main factors which led to the establishment of the Muhammadiyah were the perceived impurity of religious life, the inefficiency of religious education, the activities of Christian missionaries, and the indifferent attitude of the intelligentsia. These were the main domains where the Muhammadiyah endeavored to introduce reforms.[108] The

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[105] Achmad Jainuri, "Landasan Teologis Gerakan Pembaruan Islam." *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1995), pp. 41-42.

[106] Ibid., p. 42.

[107] Ibid., p. 45. See also Umar Hasyim, *Muhammadiyah Jalan Lurus dalam Tajdid, Dakwah, Kaderisasi dan Pendidikan: Kritik dan Terapinya* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1990), pp. 178-188.

[108] Abdu-l Muʿti Ali, "The Muhammadijah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction." (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1957), pp. 21-22. For further discussion on this issue, see Musthafa Kamal, et al., *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1988), pp. 35-39. In addition to the above aspects, Kamal asserts that the foundation of the Muhammadiyah was also influenced by the emergence of reform movements that had been in progress in other parts of the Muslim world, such as in Egypt, Mecca and India. Ahmad Dahlan (d. 1923), the founder of the Muhammadiyah, was reported to have been heavily fascinated with ʿAbduh's works such as *Tafsīr al-Manār, al-Islām wa'l-Naṣrānīyah maʿa al-ʿIlm wa'l-Madanīyah, Tafsīr Juz' ʿAmma*, etc, in addition to some works of Ibn Taymīyah, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, and other prominent scholars. He admitted that *Tafsīr al-Manār* was highly inspiring and furnished him with a moral force to strengthen his reform ideas. See ibid., p. 38. Dahlan began to study *Tafsīr al-Manār* when he came to Mecca for pilgrimage for the second time, in 1902, during which he was introduced to Rashīd Riḍā, the disciple of ʿAbduh and the co-author of *al-Manār*. Dahlan was also reported to have had some profound discussions with Riḍā regarding his ideas of reform. See,

following description by Peacock gives a clearer picture of the circumstances in which the Muhammadiyah was first established in 1912:

> At the time of Muhammadijah's founding, Christian missionaries for the first time were actively encouraged and subsidized by the colonial government, and some Muslims saw missionaries as suddenly threatening the dominance of Islam in the islands. Competing with the Christians and inspired by modernist ideas from several sources, Muhammadijah organized itself in a Western pattern alien to the santri. It elected a president, appointed a governing council, hired an office staff, formed branches all over Indonesia, held national congresses, and published reports. At the same time, Muhammadijah adhered to the Islamic taboo against receiving monetary interest, and thus opened no bank account.[109]

The Muhammadiyah asserts in its constitution that it is an Islamic movement whose mission is to propagate Islam through ordaining goodness and forbidding evil (*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), based on the precepts of Islam as put forth in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Accordingly, the main objectives of the establishment of this movement are the purification of Indonesian Islam from corrupting influences and practices, the reformulation of Islamic doctrines in the light of modern thought, the reformation of Muslim education and the defense of Islam against external influences and attacks.[110]

Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Aliran Pembaharuan Islam: Dari Jamaluddin Al-Afghani Sampai KHA Dahlan* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, n.d.,), pp. 66. See also Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 74; A, Jainuri, *Muhammadiyah: Gerakan Reformasi Islam di Jawa pada Awal Abad Keduapuluh* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1981), pp. 10-16. Quoting Nieuwenhuijze, Jainuri affirms that Muhammadiyah was established following the examples set by Muḥammad 'Abduh. See, ibid., p. 16, based on C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post Colonial Indonesia* (The Hague & Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1958), p. 45. See also, M.A. Abdul Samad, "Modernism in Islam in Indonesia with Special Reference to Muhammadiyah," in M.C. Ricklefs (ed.), *Islam in the Indonesian Social Context* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1991), pp. 58-59. However, it does not mean that Dahlan's idea of reform entirely reflects that of 'Abduh, since the latter was only one of the other sources from whom the former found his inspiration to construct his reform movement. In addition, the two figures are different to some extent, in terms of their repective strategy, emphasis, and personal quality. See Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of Muslim Modernist Organization under the Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), pp. 150-151.

[109] James L. Peacock, *Indonesia: An Anthropological Perspective*, p. 68.

[110] Abdu-l Mu'ti Ali, "The Muhammadijah Movement," p. 50; Abdul-Samad, "Modernism in Islam," pp. 60-61. For the complete constitution of the Muhammadiyah, see *Muqaddimah, Anggaran Dasar, Anggaran Rumah Tangga Muhammadiyah:*

The organization thus aims at fortifying and upholding the religion of Islam for the sake of achieving a noble, righteous and prosperous community with the favor of God.[111]

The reformists, in a broad sense, are often referred to as the *Kaum Muda*, or New Faction (more precisely "Young Faction"), in contrast to the *Kaum Tua*, or Old Faction. The Kaum Muda uphold the essential tenets of *ijtihād* and purification. *Ijtihād* from their perspective consists of rational interpretation of the Qurʾānic texts and the Ḥadīth by individuals. The opposite of *ijtihād* in this sense is *taqlīd*, or relying on the words of one's teachers, a tradition which the Kaum Muda holds in contempt. Blind *taqlīd* is considered a type of deviation from the pristine and pure, original words of Allah, since it refers only to particular schools of canonical law elaborated by the *ʿulamāʾ* from the medieval period. *Taqlīd* is also decried as the enemy of freedom of thought that causes intellectual lethargy and stagnancy in religious life.[112] The purification of religious practice is therefore necessary to eradicate all the elements of non-Islamic mysticism, magic, animism, Hinduism and Buddhism that had been incorporated into a syncretic Islam. Through this purification the reformists sought to rediscover the original, pure, true Islam. They believed that faith is the same for all men and all times, a concept that allowed them to rationalize much of the modern world. Therefore, the reformists embraced much that was new but retained a solid core of their Islamic identity.[113]

E. NU and Muhammadiyah: Some Mutual Criticisms

This puritan tendency of the reform movement has inevitably met with criticism from its opponents in the traditionalist camp. This is naturally the case, since the two parties have developed different approaches to understanding the doctrine of Islam and its practices in the Indonesian context. Some of those criticisms come from young

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Keputusan Muktamar ke-41 (AD) dan Tanwir Tahun 1987 (ART) (Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 1990).

[111] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Pedoman Bermuhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: PP. Muhammadiyah Badan Pendidikan Kader, 1990), p. 21.

[112] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), p. 105.

[113] James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 18.

scholars of a traditionalist background who perceive the modernist approach as much too textually oriented, and thus less inclined to accept local traditions and religious festivals not clearly sanctioned by the *sharī'ah*. These traditions are often the product of the people's cultural creativity, who care little as to whether or not they are justified by the texts. The traditionalists, accordingly, have employed them as a channel for expressing religious emotions by means of which they can awaken religious consciousness in their followers. The popular religious traditions most often criticized are, among others: the celebration of the Prophet's birthday on the 12th of Rabī' al-Awwal, the third month of the Muslim calendar; recitation of the *Barzanjī*, *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah, Dibā'ī*, and other Prophetic panegyrics, and the veneration of *laylat al-qadr*. The *Barzanjī* recitation, for instance, a tradition deeply rooted among the traditionalists, is considered the preferred medium for expressing intense love of the Prophet. The *Barzanjī* is frequently recited on the occasion of life cycle events (such as birth and marriage), but truly comes into its own during the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Although the latter has been censured by the modernists as a *bid'ah,* since the Prophet himself never ordered Muslims to celebrate his birthday,[114] the traditionalists nevertheless insist on doing so. As Hamim puts it: "the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid al-nabī*) has been the result of the cultural creativity that in fact has been justified by Muslim jurists

[114] The belief that the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is *bid'ah* is not only held by the modernist Muslims in Indonesia. It is also echoed by the Muslim Student Associations found in North America, such as that at McGill University. In a pamphlet distributed on the Friday prayer, July 2nd 1999, for instance, it was stated that there is nothing in the Qur'ān to say that Muslims should celebrate the birthday of the Prophet. The Prophet himself did not do this or command anyone to do it, either during his lifetime or after his death. Indeed the Prophet told them not to exaggerate about him as the Christians had about Jesus. This, according to the Pamphlet, is based on a Ḥadīth narrated by al-Bukhārī. However, the Prophet, as reported by Muslim, al-Nasa'ī, and Abū Dāwūd, made the day of his birth a day of worship in the form of fasting. When he was asked about fasting on Mondays, he replied: "That is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was entrusted with the Mission or when I was first given Revelation." The Pamphlet further insists that none of the Imāms did or commanded others to celebrate the Prophet's birthday. "The celebration of the Prophet's birthday appeared many centuries later, when many of the features of true religion had vanished and bid'ah had become widespread." See, "Mawlid al-Nabi (the Prophet's birthday): Why some people accept and some unaccept the celebration of the Prophet (s.a.w.)?" a Pamphlet by Islamic Students Society of McGill University, July 1999.

since the period of al-Suyūṭī [d. 1505?]. Almost all Shāfiʿite jurists approve the Prophet's birthday celebration with panegyric recitation as its principal activity."[115]

Due to their insistence on a textual approach to grasping religious doctrines, the modernists, according to the traditionalist critics, have lost all momentum in expanding the cultural aspects of religious activity—an approach allegedly adopted by Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ*—ever since the classical era. They have been too sensitive about frivolous matters which have no relation to the principal doctrines of Islam, such as holding parades in celebration of the Prophet's birthday and reciting hymns before undertaking the congregational prayers.[116] Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the progress of art and culture in Indonesian Islam is more evident in traditionalist circles than among the modernists. The former have no ideological constraints, it was argued, on expanding their talents in art and culture in accordance

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[115] Thoha Hamim, "Faham Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaʾah: Doktrin dan Tantangan Aswaja." *Aula*, vol. 19, no. 03 (March 1997), p. 61. Hamim's criticism of modernists is actually based on the idea held by Moenawar Chalil. His study on Chalil's thought, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thouht: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar" (1996), has caused him to defend some popular religious traditions commonly maintained by the traditionalists. Hamim devotes one chapter in the latter work to discussing Chalil's views on popular religious practices, while keenly criticizing him on several points, like the one discussed in the above presentation. See his "Moenawar Chalil's…" pp. 193-230.

[116] It is very common to see in mosques predominantly occupied by the traditionalist Muslims that the worshippers recite a litany in chorus before undertaking the congregational prayers. In Java, it usually takes place after the *adhān* or call for prayer is pronounced by a *muʿadhdhin*, and serves to fill the time while waiting for more people to join the congregation. The litany varies from mosque to mosque, and is sometimes sung in Arabic and sometimes in Javanese. Among the famous examples of the litany is a short poem (*shiʿr*) ascribed to Abū Nuwās (c. 756-810): *Ilāhī lastu li'l-Firdaws ahlā, wa-lā aqwā ʿalā al-nār al-jaḥīm/ Fa-hab lī tawbatan wa-ghfir dhunūbī, fa-innaka ghāfir al-dhanb al-ʿaẓīm/ Dhunūbī mithl aʿdād al-rimāl, wa-dhanbī zāʾid kayfa iḥtimālī/ Ilāhī ʿabduka al-ʿaṣī ātāka, muqirran bi'l-dhunūb wa-qad daʿāka/ Wa-in taghfir fa-anta li-dhāka ahl, wa-in taṭrud fa-man narju siwāka.* (Oh, my Lord, honestly I am not suitable to dwell in Paradise; yet I cannot stand remaining in Hell./ So give me redemption, and forgive my sins; indeed You are the most forgiving of the great sins./ My sins are like the amount of sand; yet my sins are always increasing, how could I endure them./ Oh my Lord, Your sinful servant comes to You; admitting all of his sins, and begging You./ So if You forgive, it is entirely Your right [to do so]; but if You reject, what other hope have I other than You?). (My own translation). I have to thank Munir ʿAbd al-Muʿin, currently a student at McGill University, for his kindness for recording for me this poem from memory. Being a student at the Pondok Gontor (East Java) for about six years (1983-1989) he could memorize this poem quite well, since, together with other students, he used to recite this litany every day before prayers when he was there.

with the tradition prevalent in the Sunnī community, where the arts have developed to a considerable degree even in the *pesantren*, home to such musical forms as *orkes, gambus* or *qasidah*.[117]

The above criticisms, however, do not reflect the fundamental issues being debated by both the Muhammadiyah and NU, especially at the present time.[118] Moreover, criticism of this nature is based largely on ideas held by Moenawar Chalil as long time ago as the 1950s, ideas which are in large part no longer relevant today. While Muhammadiyah members are still displeased with the practice of *tahlilan, barzanji, manaqib,* and *khaul,* the persistence of such popular

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[117] Thoha Hamim, "Faham Ahl al-Sunnah," p. 62. In line with this criticism, Geertz also testifies that the modernists are less interested in forms of art. However, they are more concerned with the sports which are justified, not in terms of the enjoyment resulted from them but on the basis of their body-building and health-preserving functions. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glenco, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960), p. 155. *Gambus* is a Middle Eastern-type orchestra, consisting of stringed instruments (the *gambus* proper, originally adopted from Hadramaut) and various sizes of drums (also called *terbang*). Following the rhythm of the Arabic songs a group of all-male dancers dance vigorously in circle. The *gambus* performance is usually held for circumcision, marriage and for "graduation" from *pesantrens*. See, ibid., p. 156. *Orkes* is a popular "dance band" consisting of stringed instruments tuned to the Western diatonic scale, and performed by banjos, guitars, violins, bass fiddles, mandolins, and ukeleles. Sometimes trumpets [and other new instruments] are also added. The name *orkes* is derived from the Dutch *orkest*, meaning orchestra. Ibid., p. 303. *Orkes* shows are more popular today and appear at the rites-of-passage celebrations, and thus have become more commercial. *Qasidah* is actually not far different from both *gambus* and *orkes*, except that the music is more "Arabic" in tone although the song lyrics are not always so. Usually it is used to express some "religious message" through its songs, and is mostly performed by female musicians and singers. However, Geertz does not include *orkes* and *qasidah* as forms of art developed among the *santris*. While the former is categorized as contemporary art and is not exclusively performed by the *santris* (ibid., pp. 302-307), the latter might have been less popular by the time Geertz undertook his field research. Yet Geertz mentions other forms of art not mentioned by Hamim which is very popular among the *santris,* i.e. *terbangan* and *pencak silat*. For Geertz, the main forms of art developed in the *pesantren* are *terbangan, gambusan* and *pencak silat*, all of which "combine to define quite a variant subcultural style by means of which the austere simplicities of Islam are modified for those for whom religion needs to be more than faith and works and to whom time is more than money." Ibid., p. 158.

[118] Another criticism is made by Masdar Farid Mas'udi, a young scholar with an NU background. Mas'udi's critical inquiries are more directed to the principal tenets upheld by the Muhammadiyah dealing with its injunction to return to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, the reopening of the gate of *ijtihād*, and the prohibition of *taqlīd*. For a more detailed exposition of this criticism see his "Menuju Keberagamaan yang Populistik: Reorientasi Pemikiran Keagamaan Nahdhatul Ulama-Muhammadiyah," in Yunahar Ilyas et al. (eds.), *Muhammadiyah dan NU: Reorientasi Wawasan Keislaman* (Yogyakarta: Kerjasama LPPI UMY, LKPSM NU dan PP Al-Muhsin, 1993), pp. 187-189.

religious traditions under NU sponsorship does not greatly disturb Muhammadiyah officials, since they are not their main concern. They are, however, reluctant to declare these traditions valid on the grounds that they are not firmly rooted in the teachings of the Prophet. They prefer not to speculate on matters of ritual doctrine, which can only be justified by the fact that they are performed by the "majority" of the people. The Muhammadiyah today is more concerned with issues directly relating to the social problems faced by Indonesian Muslims and less interested in debating minor differences of religious practice. M. Amin Abdullah, for instance, a young scholar and himself a chairman of the Majlis Tarjih of the Muhammadiyah Central Board, emphasizes that the Muhammadiyah always takes the initiative in handling issues that have a direct bearing on the welfare of Muslims. The Muhammadiyah, in this sense, is unlike the classical theological schools of Islam, such as the Ashʿarites or Muʿtazilites. It will not involve itself, for instance, in debating the nature of God or the number of His attributes as the Ashʿarites or Māturidites delighted in doing, nor will it be distracted by controversy over the *qaḍā'* and the *qadar*, or the validity of the five principles of Muʿtazilism (*al-uṣūl al-khamsah*). For the Muhammadiyah, it is more important to deal with formulating an effective strategy to improve the living conditions of Muslim,[119] since the Muhammadiyah believes that the fundamental sources of Islam can be translated into concrete religious, social, economic and political activities.[120]

The claim made by NU to be the sole authentic expression of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah dogma has served the organization well

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[119] M. Amin Abdullah, "Religiositas Kebudayaan," p. 108. In order to actualize its ideals, the Muhammadiyah lays down some programs once every five years in its Summit Conference, called *Muktamar*. In its last *Muktamar* (1995), this Association (*Persyarikatan*, as they prefer to call it) has outlined these general programs in *Keputusan Muktamar Muhammadiyah ke-43*, pp. 25-48. These programs are divided into five constituents: global issues, the issues of the Muslim world, the Muhammadiyah's internal issues, and the furtherance of conceptual thought. The latter consists of religious thought, science and technology, developing the economic foundation, social movement, and fortifying the Muhammadiyah Higher Education as a basis for advancing scientific achievement. The above general programs are further elaborated in detailed programs in ibid., pp. 49-72. Such programs are regularly evaluated and revised every five years when the organization performs its Summit Conference or *Muktamar*.

[120] Achmad Jainuri, "The Formation of the Muhammadiyah's Ideology, 1912-1942." (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University,1997), p. 4, quoting from *Kesimpulan Djawaban Masalah Lima Dari Beberapa ʿAlim ʿOelama* (Yogyakarta: Hoofdbestur Muhammadijah, 1942), pp. 11-17.

in its recruitment of the largest number of followers among Muslim Indonesians. Yet at the same time their adherence to the Ahl al-Sunnah is also used to legitimize ritual practices that cannot be authoritatively ascribed to the Prophet. For the sake of maintaining their popularity, they extend their tolerance to traditions that were unknown in the pristine Islam. Even this is not so much of problem for the critics, however. The real difficulty is the fact that the NU's bold claim to the Ahl al-Sunnah tends to exclude other Muslim groups from the pale of Sunnism thus effectively deligitimizing them.[121] This tendency is clearly manifested, for instance, in the following passage from an NU author:

> The teachings of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah in Indonesia will flourish more rapidly, because we realize that the programs of NU are primarily to defend and reinforce the teachings of this school. And since the majority of Indonesian Muslims are members of NU, this naturally implies that the Islamic doctrines adopted by them are those belonging to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah.[122]

Nevertheless, despite some differences in traditions and practices, both the Muhammadiyah and NU are outstanding representatives of Indonesian Islam. Each maintains that it follows only the religion of Allah, which is nothing other than His revelation, His doctrine, and His law or the *sharīʿah*.[123] As the greatest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah and NU are generally known as

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[121] In the 1950s there was a heated debate between NU and Persatuan Islam concerning this issue. The NU accused the Masyumi (Majlis Syura Muslimin Indonesia—the sole political party for the Indonesian Muslims up to 1952, in which Persatuan Islam was its paramount constituent) of being outside the pale of Islam due to its unsettled position toward Ahl al-Sunnah. Persatuan Islam, in return, argued that the epithet of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah is not a guarantee for entering paradise. The name is only a name without any special value. Persatuan Islam went even further by stating that the term Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah should not be applied to any group that followed a *madhhab*, since the legal formulations of the *madhhabs* are the products of human reasoning and are not sanctioned by either the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to their point of view, Muslims could only make decisions regarding religious matters on the revealed law found in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. They asserted that it was Persatuan Islam, and not NU, which correctly belonged to the Ahl al-Sunnah, because Persatuan Islam had always worked against the perpetuation of *bidʿah* in religious matters, while conforming to correct religious doctrine and behavior. Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1970), pp. 162-163.

[122] Rs. Abd. Aziz, *Konsepsi Ahlussunnah wal-Jamaah*, p. 86.

[123] Masdar F. Mas'udi, "Menuju Keberagamaan yang Populistik," p. 187.

representatives of the modernist and traditionalist camps, respectively. Once they were perceived as symbolizing the doctrinal conflict prevailing among Indonesian Muslims. However, although the strife could sometimes become serious, in subsequent years the people came to understand that in reality their differences were without real depth, not even touching upon the more fundamental principles, and did not jeopardize their reputations as devout Muslims. It is also impossible to see any member of these organizations accusing a person belonging to a different organization of being an infidel, something which might have happened in the 1950s. In Nurcholish Madjid's opinion, both the Muhammadiyah and NU exemplify the two wings of an eagle. It may in fact likewise have been God's will that they should both exist within the Indonesian Muslim community, on the grounds of the Qur'ānic decree that God has created all existing beings in pairs, consisting of two contradictory parts. They should, therefore, not exaggerate their differences, but rather try to come closer together and cooperate in trying to actualize the ideals of Islam.[124]

F. The Ahl al-Sunnah: Another Perspective

Besides the discussion by both NU and Muhammadiyah supporters, it is useful to consider the conclusions reached by Nurcholish Madjid in his "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah."[125] In

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[124] Nurcholish Madjid, "Reorientasi Wawasan Pemikiran Keislaman: Usaha Mencari Kemungkinan Bentuk Peran Tepat Umat Islam Indonesia di Abad XXI," in *Muhammadiyah dan NU*, pp. 193-194. Madjid refers to the Qur'anic verses "Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge" (36:36); and "And of everything We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction," (51:49) to support his arguments.

[125] Nurcholish Madjid, "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah," in Muntaha Azhari and Abdul Mun'im Saleh (eds.), *Islam Indonesia: Menatap Masa Depan* (Jakarta: Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1989), pp. 61-80. In addition to this article, Madjid's ideas on Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah are also discussed in his "Menegakkan Faham Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah 'Baru'," in Haidar Bagir (ed.), *Satu Islam, Sebuah Dilema* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986), pp. 11-34. These two articles by Madjid on Ahl al-Sunnah are actually quite similar, except that the former is more elaborate than the latter. However, since they are not directly written by Madjid but are transcribed from some structured interviews with him by the editors of the books, they appear to be less exhaustive. Nevertheless he has forwarded a new perspective on this issue differing from those presented by the NU and the Muhammadiyah.

this article, Madjid asserts that the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah is a unifying force that has brought Muslims together into a single, unified *ummah*. He refers to the Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (65-86/685-705) who tried to put an end to the conflicts among Muslims. These conflicts had been disrupting the Muslim *ummah* since the death of the third Caliph, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (d. 35/656). Through his successful attempt at resolving the second Civil War of the early Islamic period (60-73/680-692), he managed to reconcile his fellow Muslims and thus invented the concept of *jamāʿah*, the community. This concept, according to Madjid, signifies the spirit of *inclusivism*, by introducing religious plurality among Muslims. A famous maxim was coined to reinforce this concept: *naḥnu jamāʿat wāḥidah taḥta rāyat dīn Allāh*, "we are of a single community under the banner of the religion of Allah." In addition, ʿAbd al-Malik also introduced the concept of *tarbīʿ*, that is, acknowledgement of the first four caliphs as the legitimate leaders of the Muslim community after the Prophet: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. For the Umayyads, it was onerous to acknowledge ʿAlī as a legitimate caliph, due to their hostility toward his house. Accordingly, they were willing to pay homage only to Muʿāwiyah, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. However, through ʿAbd al-Malik's efforts to maintain unity, they were able to accept ʿAlī's position as a legitimate caliph at the expense of "sacrificing" Muʿāwiyah's privilege, but on the condition that he should be placed after ʿUthmān,[126] in accordance with chronological order.

Based on this historical experience, Madjid believes that the ideal community should be based on the concept of *jamāʿah*, with its character as an overt and inclusive community, willing to accept plurality as well as open to dialogue. Therefore, Madjid further asserts, it would be erroneous—and even ironic—if those who claim to be the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah take an exclusive stance, unwilling to accept cultural diversity and pluralism. The idea of *jamāʿah* also conveys a non-sectarian spirit. Madjid insists that it is impossible to have religious faith while at the same time claiming to hold a monopoly on truth. For Madjid, the basic principles of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah can even be extended to current attempts to achieve world peace. In addition, the spirit of non-sectarianism inherent in the concept of the Ahl al-Sunnah could enhance the idea

[126] Madjid, "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah," p. 68.

of *irjā'* or suspension, i.e., the idea that it is none of human's business to judge a person as eligible for either paradise or hell. It is Allah alone who has the authority to decide whether a person will or will not attain salvation and hence enter paradise.[127] It is true that the idea of *irjā'* has a negative aspect, since it might provide someone with an excuse to maintain only a minimal amount of religiosity, based on the belief that whoever pronounces *lā ilāha illa Allāh* at the end of one's life will enter paradise.[128] However, this is outweighed by its beneficial aspects in that it provides Muslims with the "lowest common denominator" for a wider variety of religious practices, and can be instrumental in minimizing the sources of conflict among Muslim groups.[129]

Madjid suggests that an ideal Islamic community established on the concept of *jamā'ah* is congruent with the modern concept of a pluralistic, democratic, and anti-sectarian community. In discussing

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[127] The first application of the idea of *irjā'* was most likely the decision regarding ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. This is implied by the statement of Ibn Saʿad that the verbal noun *irjā'* is used to mean "the belief of the Murji'ites" to the effect that the first Murji'ites "postponed" the decision about ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, and did not say whether they were believers or unbelievers. A note, however, is given by Watt that the *irjā'* attributed to al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyah is an early expression of the attitude, but may not have gone beyond refusing to decide between ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr. In religio-political matters, "postponement" implies a rejection of the Kharijite thesis that ʿUthmān was an unbeliever and therefore excluded from the community. Some Kharijites had also for a time regarded ʿAlī as an unbeliever and had fought against him. See W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), pp. 124, 342.

[128] Watt refers to a saying attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī that the man who affirms the *shahādah* at his death will go to Paradise. By the time of al-Ṭaḥawī (d. 933), however, the point had been extensively elaborated. He states that those who commit grave sins are in Hell, but not eternally, provided that at their death they were monotheists (*muwaḥḥidūn*). Then, after quoting the verse "God does not forgive the associating (of any being) with Him (*an yushraka bihi*—in worship), but He forgives what is short of that" (4:48, 116), al-Ṭaḥawī continues: "if [H]e wills, [H]e in [H]is justice punishes them in Hell to the measure of their offence, then in His mercy and at the intercession of intercessors from among the people obeying [H]im [H]e removes them from Hell and raises them to [H]is Paradise." To sum up, "there is some hope for them of attaining Paradise, but it depends on God's will." See Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 137. Nevertheless, this view was regarded to be an encouragement to "moral laxity," based on the belief that "where there is *īmān*, sin does no harm." In other words, "where a man has not forfeited his membership of the community through *shirk*, he will not be eternally punished for sin." But this belief has been rejected by al-Ṭaḥawī who suggests: "we do not say 'where there is *īmān* sin does not harm the doer'. We hope for Paradise for the believers who do good, but we are not certain of it." Ibid., p. 136.

[129] Madjid, "Aktualisasi Ajaran," p. 69.

his idea of a "pluralistic community," he also gives his own insight into the Ḥadīth discussing the splitting of the community into seventy-three groups. On the basis of this Ḥadīth, he admits, it is possible that many would reject his idea of "pluralistic community." However, he testifies that there is another version of it cited by al-Ghazālī in his *Faiṣal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Īmān wa'l-Zandaqah.*[130] In this latter Ḥadīth it is mentioned that all of the seventy-three groups will enter paradise except for one, an idea very clearly in opposition to the meaning contained in the other versions previously discussed. While this suggests that the Ḥadīths relating to the schism are on the whole unreliable, Madjid offers a possible solution to this contradiction. According to his point of view, the only group that will enter paradise is the one which is not exclusive and is willing to admit the right of other groups to enter paradise, namely, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. This group is also uninterested in trivial doctrinal matters (*khilāfiyah*). Therefore, the groups that will go to hell, based on al-Ghazālī's Ḥadīth, are those who claim that theirs is the only true and correct belief.[131]

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[130] Madjid might have used a different edition of al-Ghazālī's work, since such a title is not found in Online Catalogue of the Northern American Libraries. Brockelmann mentions a title *similar* to that mentioned by Madjid. Yet it remains different, since it reads *K[itāb] at-Tafriqa bain al-Īmān wazzandaqa*, rather than *Faisal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Īmān wa'l-Zandaqah*. See C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (1898), vol. 1, p. 421; Supplement (1937), vol. 1, p. 747. Instead of that noted above, a work of al-Ghazālī found in the Library of Islamic Studies, McGill University, is entitled *Fayṣal al-Tafriqah bayn al-Islām wa'l-Zandaqah*, edited by Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1961). The Ḥadīth meant by Madjid is mentioned in p. 193, saying "*Sa-taftariq ummatī biḍ'an wa-sab'īn firqatan, kulluhum fi'l-jannah illā al-zanādiqah*," (my community will split into seventy-and-several groups, all of which will enter paradise, except the unbelievers). Sulaymān Dunyā, the editor of the book, has a lengthy comment on al-Ghazālī's citation of this Ḥadīth. He says that it is hard for him to find an equivalent to such a Ḥadīth since the Ḥadīth books available to him mention the different idea, that "all of them will go to hell except one, (*kulluhum fi'l-nār illā wāḥidah…)*," like the similar Ḥadīths noted previously. Dunyā repeats this comment in an introductory remark he makes to his treatise, *Al-Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh bayn al-Falāsifah wa'l-Kalāmīyīn* (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1958), vol. 1, especially pp. 56 ff. Dunyā asserts that, based on these contradictory Ḥadīths, even ʿAbduh himself admits that "to verify the group being singled out as safe indicated by the Ḥadīth is an exhausting task." Accordingly ʿAbduh, as reported by Dunyā, comes to a conclusion that indeed the Ḥadīth is not precise enough to determine which group of Muslims is to be singled out as safe, an idea that is not far different from that of Madjid. See ibid., p. 58.

[131] Madjid, "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah," pp. 69-70. Madjid's idea seems to be in congruence with the one maintained by Bernard Lewis. Al-Ghazālī's different interpretation of the Ḥadīth, as above reported by Madjid, is in fact based on al-

Madjid has tried to offer a new perspective with regard to the position of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah among Indonesian Muslims by referring to its historical background. By so doing he makes an assessment of the doctrinal stances taken by both the Muhammadiyah and NU with their respective claims to be the followers of Ahl al-Sunnah. He emphasizes that Indonesian Muslims must learn from history how past Muslims responded to challenges they encountered in every era and locality. Among the early scholars who successfully resolved the problems facing them were Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd in philosophy, al-Junayd and al-Bisṭāmī in Sufism, and the four *madhhab* leaders in jurisprudence. But in general, despite discrepancies in their approaches and the results they achieved, there was always a "common denominator," that is the school of *al-Jamāʿah*, later on better known as the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. However, Madjid asserts that it must be differentiated from that of the Ahl al-Sunnah as embodied by NU in Indonesia, since he wants to interpret it in a more proportioned and historical sense. Nevertheless, he agrees with the fact that Indonesian Sunnites (NU?) are the followers of al-Ashʿarī in their doctrinal precepts (*uṣūl al-dīn*), of one of the four *madhhabs* in jurisprudence, and of al-Junayd and al-Bistāmī in Sufism. But since these scholars had emerged as defenders of Islam against the challenges of their particular era and locality, it is urgent, therefore, to avoid reiterating the disputation over controversial issues that had been inherited from the medieval era. He suggests that it would be better for Muslims to direct their energy toward establishing a new *Weltanschauung* (worldview) in the theological, cosmological and anthropological realms. By establishing this new *Weltanschauung*, Muslims will, he hopes, be able to discover the specific paradigms that will allow them to respond better to current challenges. Muslims should be able to benefit from the achievements of medieval scholars who were deeply rooted in Islamic tradition so that they can broaden their religious horizons. In making this assessment Madjid insists that it is not necessary for Muslims to begin again from zero, an expression he has chosen to use on several occasions.[132] He seems

Ghazālī's disagreement with theologians who hastened to denounce dissidents as unbelievers. Al-Ghazālī, according to Lewis, even blamed those theologians as only aspired to "constrict the vast mercy of God to [H]is servants and make paradise the preserve of a small clique of theologians." See, Bernard Lewis, "The Faith and the Faithful," p. 30.

[132] Madjid gives an interesting illustration of how maintaining traditional values would be very beneficial for achieving further progress in the modern era. He

thereby to be indirectly criticizing the Muhammadiyah's position, which, due to its emphasis on the necessity of returning to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and its efforts to eradicate religious innovations (*bid'ah*), has undermined certain Islamic traditional legacies. Although the Muhammadiyah has developed deeper insights concerning current world issues, Madjid argues, it nevertheless lacks a traditional basis. Accordingly, Madjid suggests that it would be better if the merits possessed by both the traditionalists and the modernists were combined to form what has been called Neo-Modernism, a term invented by Fazlur Rahman. Neo-Modernism, according to Madjid, is a modernism that is deeply rooted in tradition, and serves as a corrective to the unbridled modernism which had emerged before.[133]

G. Islamic Orthodoxy in Indonesia: Santri versus Abangan

Thus it can be said that both the Muhammadiyah and NU are equally orthodox in their religious outlook. They merely represent,

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compares Japan and Turkey in their respective attempts to gain modernity. Turkey, according to Madjid, was the first non-Western country to realize how important it was to be modern. But since the Turks undervalued the traditions they already had, they failed to apply that modernity in Turkish cultural life; and thus modernity remains something alien to them, as it never became a predominant constituent in their cultural entity. On the contrary, Japan has been more successful, since it firmly retains its old traditions. As an illustration, Madjid mentions that although the basic electronic appliances were originally invented in the West, the Japanese could auspiciously modify them into small, handy, and attractive tools, such as *walkmans*. Today the world markets are mostly flooded by the Japanese products. Their success is basically due to their keen creativity in transforming their cultural heritage of producing *bonsai* and *ikebana* into modifying the Western products of electronic appliances. Based on this illustration, Madjid suggests the necessity of maitaining the cultural heritage of the Muslim past in order to achieve further progress in the future, without restarting it from the zero. He refers to a saying popularly circulated among the traditionalists, *al-muḥāfazat 'alā al-qadīm al-ṣāliḥ, wa'l-akhdh bi'l-jadīd al-aṣlaḥ*, "maintaining the old (traditions) which are good, while accepting the new (matters) which are better." See, "Aktualisasi Ajaran Ahlussunnah," pp. 62-63.

[133] Nurcholish Madjid, "Menegakkan Faham Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah 'Baru'," pp. 32-34. For further discussion on Neo-Modernism in Indonesia, see Greg Barton, "Neo-Modernism: A Vital Synthesis of Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia." *Studia Islamika*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1995), pp. 1-75; idem, "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual *Ulama*': The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought. *Studia Islamika*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1997), pp. 29-81. I will return to this issue later in discussing the contemporary development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia (Chapter Four).

based on Madjid's assessment noted previously, the two different "colors" of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia: traditionalist and modernist. Their differences lie mainly in their emphasis on the concepts of being orthodox. While the Muhammadiyah tends to be more rigid and puritanical, NU, on the contrary, is more tolerant of some practices and beliefs having no clear basis in the fundamental doctrines of Islam. Nevertheless, NU is insistent on its membership in the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, while the Muhammadiyah, although less explicit in affirming its attachment to this school, likewise claims to belong. However, it must be kept in mind that NU and the Muhammadiyah are only two among many other Muslim organizations that are active in Indonesia. There are still many individual Muslims who are not officially members of any Islamic organization available in the country. They are no less devout, however, since it is evidently legitimate to be a devout Muslim without associating oneself with that Islamic organization.[134] This state of affairs is largely the result of the religious instruction offered in the Government's educational institutions, which have been instrumental in helping young Muslims to gain a better understanding of their religious doctrines, almost equivalent to that provided by the *pesantrens*. Similarly, there are many *pesantrens* which are not associated with the NU, although traditionally the latter was considered to have almost a monopoly on this network of learning institutions in Indonesia.

All of those who correctly observe their religious duties and willfully avoid all religious prohibitions must therefore be regarded as devout and orthodox Muslims, regardless of their association with (or dissociation from) any social or religious organizations. Their orthodox status is reflected, especially in Java, in applying the term *santri* to them, which reflects the general feature of religious adherence in Indonesian Islam. As has been previously discussed, the opposite of *santri*, in terms of religious observance, is *abangan*, signifying those who are nominally Muslims and have but little knowledge of their

[134] Sidney Jones has an interesting explanation of this issue. When the NU's political position was strong enough up to the early 1970s, affiliation with this or other Islamic organizations was considered as one's token of being a pious Muslim. But, after that, when the Government became increasingly involved in Islamic affairs, and since more Muslim figures and the members of the "*ummat*" were coopted or coerced into the ruling party of Golongan Karya (GOLKAR), no longer could identity as a pious Muslim be determined by one's affiliation with a religious organization. See his article, "The Contraction and Expansion of the 'Umat' and the Role of Nahdatul Ulama in Indonesia." *Indonesia*, vol. 38 (October 1984), p. 19.

religion. While the *santris* are viewed as "orthodox" Muslims, this by no means implies that the *abangans* represent "heterodox" Muslims. So far, no scholar has employed the term in this sense. Even the term *abangan* itself, to a certain degree, is felt to be too harsh a designation. From the religious point of view, it might be better to consider them as those who know less about Islam, are not overly concerned with its precepts, and thus are not so strict in fulfilling their religious obligations.[135]

Nevertheless, the difference between the *santris* and *abangans* are very apparent. In general, while the *abangans* are fairly indifferent to doctrine but fascinated with ritual detail, the *santris* are almost entirely concerned with doctrine. For instance, the *abangans* are very aware when they should give a *slametan* or communal feast and the major foods that should be prepared for different types of *slametan*, as well as the meaning of their symbolism. According to Geertz, *slametan*, which symbolizes mystic and social unity, is at the core of *abangan* ritual practices. In maintaining this tradition, all kinds of invisible beings are invited to sit together with the other participants and share the same food. Therefore, it is the food, and not the prayer, which constitutes the heart of the *slametan.* For the *santris*, basic rituals are also important, particularly the daily prayers. But they lay much more stress on doctrine, especially the moral message and social interpretation conveyed in it. Among the urban *santris* this doctrine is believed to have made them more apologetic defenders of Islam, with a superior ethical code for modern life, as a workable social doctrine for modern society. In addition, there has been a remarkable shift among the *santris*, especially those in rural areas, so that it is not merely the knowledge of ritual detail or spiritual discipline which they are expected to uphold, but more importantly the application of Islamic doctrine to life. The *santris* are easily distinguished from their *abangan* neighbors by their insistence that they are true Muslims, with their commitment to Islam dominating almost every aspect of life.[136] Their distinction is also perceptible in the *santris'* commitment

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[135] B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 4.

[136] For further discussion on the differences between *santris* and *abangans*, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, pp. 121-130. For the meaning of *slametan*, see ibid., pp. 14-15. For other discussions on *slametan*, see Mark R. Woodward, "The *Slametan*: Textual Knowledge and Ritual Performance in Central Java Islam." *History of Religions*, vol. 28, no. 1 (August 1988), pp. 54-89; Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese*

to strict ritual practice, depth of religious comprehension, and rejection of animist and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs and practices.[137]

It must be kept in mind, however, that although Islamic orthodoxy is believed to have flourished more vigorously during the last several decades, this does not mean that all of the *sharī'ah* regulations are fully applied in Indonesia. Indonesian Muslims are aware that from the orthodox point of view, submission to God—the very meaning of Islam—means compliance with the law. Their obedience to this stance is considered to define a just society and lead to the reward of heaven, while their disobedience will cause social disorder and lead to the punishment of hell. Nevertheless, the *sharī'ah* regulations concerning criminal and civil law, are rarely enforced. The application of the *sharī'ah* seems to be confined to the ritual system which provides the framework for the religious life of the orthodox community.[138] In addition, based on Geertz's observation of Javanese religious life, it is very hard for them to be "real Muslims," in the sense of accepting fully and at the deepest emotional levels the religion of Islam.[139] In Gibb's words, this religion is described as a religion which "set[s] the terms of a new experiment in human religion, an experiment in pure monotheism, unsupported by any of the symbolism or other forms of appeal to the emotions of the common man, which had remained embedded in the earlier monotheistic religions."[140]

Geertz may be right insofar as his findings based on field observation in Mojokuto, East Java, in the early 1950s indicate this. At that time the country was only newly freed from colonialism, and the people were restrained from achieving a better understanding of their religion. When political rivalry was very dominant, the spread of religious learning was forced to follow the political ideology imposed by the dominant figures in society, in the sense that to choose a certain religious pattern would almost equally entail choosing a certain

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Religion: An Anthropological Account (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), especially ch. 2, pp. 25-50; and Masdar Hilmy, "Islam and Javanese Acculturation: Textual and Contextual Analysis of the *Slametan* Ritual." (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1999).

[137] Joseph Tamney, "Modernization and Religious Purification," p. 209.

[138] Mark R. Woodward, "The *Slametan*: Textual Knowledge and Ritual Performance," p. 56.

[139] Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 160.

[140] H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, p. 70, as also quoted by Geertz in ibid.

political association. This inevitably curtailed the natural progress of Islam in the area. However, since the establishment of the New Order (1967), the political activities in rural areas have been greatly restricted. This program of rural "depoliticization" was supposed to have been an effective factor in reducing religious polarization.[141] The reduction of religious polarization, together with the improvement in economic life, relative political stability, and easier communication and transportation facilitated by the New Order regime have brought a significant change in religious life as well. In other words, the overall development during the New Order era strengthened the institutional advantage of orthodox Islam. Meanwhile, the syncretists are said to have failed to create a mass-based and explicitly non-Islamic "Javanese" religion. The young people in rural areas, due to the weakening of the village traditions, are encouraged to look for more encompassing moral guides to modernity beyond their village sphere, since the New Order provides them with a setting for a profound adjustment in the balance of power between Islam and Javanism. These are all conditions which are conducive to the growth of orthodox Islam.[142]

Such changes in religious life took place not only in that remote area (or similar region) where Geertz undertook his research, but also in the heart of the Javanese civilization, the Yogyakarta Court. Kuntowijoyo, one of the contemporary leading Muslim scholars and literati, testifies that indeed Javanism is not a static entity. In his own words, it is not a "being" but a "becoming," something that is continuously in process. From the nineteenth century, argues Kuntowijoyo, Javanism with its monolithic features of "pre-Hinduism plus Hindu-Buddhism plus Sufism" began to transform itself into something more pluralistic, as it conveys some new elements of *pesantren*, Malay and Middle Eastern influences. From time to time Javanism has blurred, while orthodoxy grows even brighter. The Javanese court of Yogyakarta, which was a symbol of syncretism, now also grows more orthodox. The mass Qur'ānic recitation, called *semakan*,[143] in the court has apparently displaced the *slametan* customar-

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[141] Robert W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3 (August 1987), p. 535.

[142] Sven Cederroth, *Survival and Profit in Rural Java: The Case of an East Javanese Village* (Surrey, Great Britain: Curzon Press, 1995), pp. 278-279.

[143] *Semakan* is a religious gathering held to recite the Qur'ān thoroughly from the first *sūrah* (chapter) of al-Fātiḥah up to the end (*sūrah* 114). Several reciters, called

ily held for the court birthday celebration. The Sultan and his family went on pilgrimage to Mecca, and are devotedly observant of their daily prayers. In general, the Javanese are growing more orthodox in belief (*ʿaqīdah*), ritual practices (*ʿibādah*), ethics (*akhlāq*), and law (*sharīʿah*). In these four aspects Islamic orthodoxy is universally manifested, but Javanese symbolism remains present in their religious behavior. For instance, to pay respect to one's parents (*birr al-wālidayn*), which is a universal Islamic doctrine, a Javanese must use a higher, polite level of Javanese (*krama inggil*) in addressing them. The use of such a higher degree of Javanese is a symbol of respect manifested by the younger people to those older. There is also a *sungkeman* tradition held once a year when every member of the family gets together during the *ʿĪd al-Fiṭr* celebration, to ask forgiveness from each other and to pray for the well-being of the family, as well as to strengthen the family ties. Asking forgiveness from one's parents is a request for their favor, and thus will bring further blessing. The value is Islamic, but expressed in Javanese symbolism.[144]

Finally, before concluding our discussion on Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia, it is necessary to take a closer look at some other facets of Islam, as represented by both the Muhammadiyah and NU. It has been repeatedly stated that they represent modernists and traditionalist orthodox Muslims in Indonesia, and their supporters are equally considered to be *santris*. Geertz, however, uses another term to cat-

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Ḥuffāẓ (sg. *Ḥāfiẓ*), who have learnt by heart the whole content of the Qurʾān, are assigned to recite the Qurʾān in turn, from memory without seeing the text. The other participants, usually in great number, listen carefully to their recitation and check verse by verse from the text (called *nyemak*, from which the word *semakan* is derived). The *semakan* usually lasts up to 19 hours, beginning after dawn prayer (*salāt al-ṣubḥ*), at about five o'clock in the morning, with some short breaks for meals and prayers. The *semakan* is a tradition initially invented among the traditionalists, but was made more popular by Hamim Jazuli (d. 1993), a charismatic *kyahi* of Kediri (East Java) in the late 1980s. Later, the *semakan* tradition is also adopted by the Muhammadiyah. "It is ironic," argues the late AR Fakhruddin, the previous chairman of the Muhammadiyah, "that the Muhammadiyah, which has encouraged people to return to the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, does not pay much attention to Qurʾanic memorization (*taḥfīẓ al-Qurʾān*). It is our obligation to master the Qurʾān in terms of recitation (*tilāwah*), interpretation (*tafsīr*), and its [doctrinal] application in our daily life." The *semakan* at the Yogyakarta Court was first held in December 1990, in congruence with the celebration of the 243rd anniversary of the Yogyakarta sultanate. About 30,000 people were reported to have participated in this "grand" *semakan*. See, "Semakan Al Qurʾan di Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat." *Aula*, vol. 13, no. 1 (January 1991), pp. 45-49.

[144] Kuntowijoyo, "Islamisasi Jawaisme," as quoted from http://www.republika.co.id (18 April 1998).

egorize their religious features by introducing the term *moḍeren* (the Indonesian spelling for modern) to designate the "modernists;" and *kolot* (the old-fashioned and conservative mind) to denote the "traditionalists." Basically, these terms signify a deep cleavage between the two groups and are very significant in distinguishing them, probably up to mid-1970s. Up until then, the distinction in religious patterns was transformed in part into political rivalry between the two groups to win the competition for holding the power. Today it seems to have changed considerably and their religious disputation has blurred on the basis that the leaders of both groups have come to accept a general and watered-down version of modernism, although the old division still remains in effect.[145]

Geertz has clearly distinguished the religious patterns followed by the two groups in terms of the content of the doctrines involved and the different interpretations of the Islam of the *moḍeren* and the *kolot*. He takes five pairs of oppositions summarizing their differences as follows:

> (1) The *kolot* group tends to emphasize a relationship with God in which the reception of blessings as acts of His Grace and in reward for one's moral uprightness and a sense of the individual career as being entirely fated by His Will are the main features. The *moḍeren* group tends to emphasize a relationship with God in which hard work and self-determination are emphasized.
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> (2) The *kolot* group tends to hold a "totalistic" concept of the role of religion in life, in which all aspects of human endeavor tend to take on a religious significance and the boundaries between the religious and the secular tend to be blurred. The *moḍeren* group tends to hold a narrowed notion of religion in which only certain well-defined aspects of life are sacralized and in which the boundary between the sacred and the secular tends to be fairly sharp.
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> (3) The *kolot* group tends to be less concerned (but still concerned) with the purity of their Islam and more willing to allow non-Islamic rites at least a minor place within the religious sphere. The *moḍeren* group tends to insist upon an Islam purified of any foreign religious matter.
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> (4) The *kolot* group tends to emphasize the immediately consummatory aspects of religion, to emphasize religious experience. The *moḍeren*

[145] Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 130.

> group tends to emphasize the instrumental aspects of religion, and to be concerned with religious behavior.
>
> (5) The *kolot* group tends to justify practice by custom and by detailed scholastic learning in traditional religious commentaries. The *moḍeren* group tends to justify it upon the basis of its pragmatic value in contemporary life and by general reference to the Koran and the Hadith interpreted loosely.[146]

In general, their distinction in doctrinal matters can be further summarized as a "fated" life versus a "self-determined" one; a "totalistic" view of religion versus a "narrowed" one; a more "syncretic" Islam versus a "pure" one; an interest in "religious experience" versus an emphasis on the "instrumental aspects of religion;" and the justification of practice by "custom" and "scholastic learning" versus justification by the "spirit of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth." Based on the above distinctions, Geertz asserts that it is by no accident that the *kolot* group is considered closer to the *abangan*. However, since this distinction is based on Geertz's survey in the 1950s, not all of the distinctions remain true for the present era. Despite the general features maintained by the *kolot* group, as Geertz himself testifies, they have made many changes in their religious pattern. When the *kolot* of the *santris* are propelled by class, occupation, geography or family history, they have made a crucial shift and started a process of adopting more genuine religious doctrines. A similar shift may have possibly taken place among the *abangan* group too,[147] although to a lesser degree.

To sum up, Geertz's judgement seems to be in congruence with the result of an examination undertaken by Nakamura about three decades later. According to Nakamura, the process of Islamization is not merely the necessity to conform to the ritual orthodoxy of Islam but also the true devotion to fulfilling its moral and ethical teachings.[148] Moreover, perceiving that the current process of Islamization is not a matter of change in the ideological orientation from traditionalism to modernism within the *santri* group, Nakamura further emphasizes that this process is more concerned with the religious

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[146] Ibid., pp. 149-150.
[147] Ibid., pp. 160-161.
[148] Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), p. 2.

outlook of the population. He maintains that "an increasingly large number of individuals in the *abangan* category have moved and are still moving towards the category of *santri*, becoming more orthodox in their thought and deeds as Muslims."[149] In general, the ongoing process of Islamization does not only mean an increase in the number of Muslims but also a deeper understanding of Islamic doctrines as well as the growing awareness on the part of Muslims of the significance of daily religious practices based on direct reference to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth.[150]

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[149] Ibid., p. 13.

[150] Syafiq A. Mughni, *Hassan Bandung Pemikir Islam Radikal* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1994), pp. 8-9.

CHAPTER THREE

RECONSTRUCTING A THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE: THE REFORMIST ATTEMPTS TO SUSTAIN ORTHODOX BELIEFS

It has been discussed earlier that although the process of Islamization in Indonesia has been underway for a very long time, it is still far from being complete. In certain areas, Islam remained very weak and continued to be overwhelmed by local traditions incongruent with the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. It was the goal of the reform movements that emerged in the early twentieth century to purge Muslim religious life of all customs which could not be justified under Islam. Islamic reform in Indonesia, however, had in fact, begun two or three centuries before the emergence of the Muhammadiyah and other similar movements. In the seventeenth century some Sufi *'ulamā'*, such as Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1666), 'Abd al-Ra'ūf of Singkel (d. 1699), and al-Shaykh Yūsuf of Macassar (d. 1696) tried to introduce new perspectives on Sufism as well as to bring it closer to the domain of the *Sharī'ah*.[1]

Unlike the reform movements of the early twentieth century, the earliest attempts could never generate significant popular support due to a lack of communication and organizational resources. However, in terms of doctrine, both the earlier and the later movements were not very much different. They both emphasized the necessity of return-

[1] Azyumardi Azra, "Akar-akar Historis Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia: Neo-Sufisme Abad ke 11-12H/ 17-18M, Prelude bagi Gerakan Pembaharuan Muhammadiyah," in M. Din Syamsuddin (ed.), *Muhammadiyah Kini & Esok* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), p. 7. Unfortunately, not all of these scholars have been studied thoroughly. It seems only al-Rānīrī who has received significant attention from scholars, such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in his *A Commentary on the Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture Malaysia, 1986). In his introduction, al-Attas states that al-Rānīrī worked against the pseudo-sufism of incarnation, dualism, pantheism and monism, which he blamed as strayed Wujūdīyah. The defenders of this pseudo-sufism held that "God Most Exalted is ourselves and our beings, and we are His Self and His Being." Al-Rānīrī's vigorous attempt to banish this deviant doctrine actually brought about a gradual process of correction in Sufi doctrines and metaphysics. Al-Rānīrī's efforts were also considered an intensification and standardization of the process of Islamization in the Malay world. See, al-Attas, ibid., pp. 8-9.

ing to the moral guidance of the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth through a greater fidelity to the *Sharīʿah*. They also maintained as a similar ground for establishing their respective reforms that Islam was not properly adhered to by the common people, and thus the reformers concluded that Indonesian Islam was impure. Their message was an injunction to return to the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth in order to discover the true pristine Islam. Nevertheless, their movements countered a great challenge from their fellow Muslims, and caused a severe dispute with the supporters of traditional customs. These reformers came to be known as *Kaum Muda* (the Younger Faction) while the traditionalists were known as *Kaum Tua* (the Older Faction).[2]

The Muhammadiyah, like its fellow Muslim associations, such as Persatuan Islam and al-Irsyad, sought to purify Indonesian Islamic religious beliefs and practices of uncertain origin based on local traditions and customs. This movement endeavored to realize their vision of the pristine form of Islam founded only on its fundamental sources. Their activities, however, extended far beyond theological concerns and embraced concrete issues through religious propagation, social movements and education. The Muhammadiyah was

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[2] The terms *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* originally appeared in West Sumatra in about 1906. They originate in a conflict between the Old and the Young concerning their respective attitudes toward the idea of progress (*kemajuan*), especially in its relation to their subscription to *adat* (local customs) and religion. Accordingly, the "Young" (*muda*) was contrasted with the "Old" (*tua*). While the former was defined as a symbol of progress, the latter was seen as a symbol of backwardness and conservative outlook. On the other hand, the "Young" also meant "rootless," while the "Old" meant "exaltness and the glory." In secular terms, the conflict was defined as that between the progressive and the conservative factions; and in religious terms, it was the struggle between the modernist and the traditionalist ʿulamāʾ. The emergence of the Kaum Muda in Minangkabau of West Sumatra, according to Taufik Abdullah, was influenced by the Young Turks movement in the Middle East. See Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), pp. 12-13. See also Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia (1900-1942)* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 6-7. In Java, the conflict between the two groups mainly dealt with the issues of the necessity of *ijtihād* advocated by the Kaum Muda but rejected by the Kaum Tua who maintained the necessity of *taqlīd* or blind imitation. See Noer, ibid., pp. 86-87; Syafiq A. Mughni, *Hassan Bandung Pemikir Islam Radikal* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1994), pp. 38-46. For a discussion on the conflict between the Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua in West Java, see Wendy Mukhrejee, "*Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* in West Java: The Literary Record," in Peter G. Riddle and Tony Street (ed.), *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society. A Festschrift in Honour of Anthony H. Johns* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 309-323.

deeply concerned with the quality of belief among Indonesian Muslims. Indonesian Islam, they believed, had been almost entirely overwhelmed by corrupting traditions, such as superstitions and innovations. Unfamiliar with proper Islamic practice, folk custom became confused with Islamic doctrine. Realizing this, Muhammadiyah activists frequently quoted a saying attributed to Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), "*al-Islām mahjūb bi'l-Muslimīn*," that Islam has been concealed by Muslims. In other words, Indonesian Islam does not reflect "real" Islam.[3] Accordingly, the Muhammadiyah, first of all, encouraged Muslims to realize that the true Islam is not found in popular opinion of people or manifested through their performance. On the contrary, true Islam should be sought in the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, the only authoritative sources of moral guidance.[4]

In keeping with its nature as a reform movement, the Muhammadiyah exhorted Muslims to abandon those indigenous practices and beliefs that could not be justified according to Islamic tradition. In the Muhammadiyah phraseology, these were classified as *bidʿah* (innovation) and *khurāfāt* (superstition). These two categories of religious deviance were regarded as the principal factors by which the religious message of Islam had been distorted. *Bidʿah*, as defined by Muhammadiyah scholars, is the belief that certain forms of behavior and belief had been sanctioned by the Prophet, while in reality they were not. The appearance of *bidʿah* came from a desire to extend the popular influence of Islam. Often, however, people would formally accept Islam without truly understanding its moral and ethical contents. *Bidʿah,* therefore, was an unintentional mistake. However, as a mistake, it needed to be corrected directly. Similarly, superstition, or *khurāfāt*, is considered to be an attachment to the religious beliefs and practices of the religions professed by people prior to the arrival of Islam. Consequently, in order to purify belief, those practices and beliefs associated with *khurāfāt* needed to be effaced as soon as Muslims become aware of the true doctrine of Islam.[5] It is

[3] KR. Hadji Hadjid, "Al-Bidʿah." *Suara Muhammadijah*, no. 1 (March 1958), p. 12.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Howard M. Federspiel, "The Muhammadijah: A Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia." *Indonesia*, vol. 10 (October 1970), p. 64. Federspiel refers to a tract of 1955 by the Panitya Ketjil Madjlis Tabligh Sub Bid'ah Churafat, entitled "Tabligh Menghadapi Bid'ah-Churafat—Agama-agama Lain, dsb.nja," in *Tuntunan Tabligh*, 3, p. 47. For another discussion on the issue of *bidʿah* by Indonesian scholars,

only through eradicating both *bid'ah* and *khurāfāt* on the one hand, and embracing the genuine principles in the scriptures of Islam on the other, that the revitalization of Islam can occur. Furthermore, it is only through the revitalization of Islam that the inertia and deterioration of Muslim vitality over the past centuries can be reversed.[6]

Due to the need to formulate a strategy of action a number of *'ulamā'* associated with the Muhammadiyah convened a conference in 1927, in order to discuss religious life in Indonesia. Originally, these *'ulamā'* were incited by the rise of Ahmadiyah belief among some Indonesian Muslims, especially their claim that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qodian was a prophet after Muḥammad and the Promised Messiah. This threatening movement provoked the Muhammadiyah to found a special council consisting of a group of *'ulamā'* responsible for discussing doctrinal matters and supervising religious performance among Muhammadiyah members.[7] The council was originally called *Perkumpulan Musyawaratul Ulama'*, or the Association of the Deliberation of *'Ulamā'*, but later adopted the name *Majlis Tarjih*. Among its activities, this council was responsible for fostering the study of Islamic law and formulating religious guidance for doctrinal issues,

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see M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Kriteria Sunnah & Bid'ah* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 1998). The work offers a rigid perspective on the concept of *bid'ah*, not only in terms of doctrinal matters but also of ritual practices. Another perspective is presented by Sukarnawadi H. Husnuddu'at, *Meluruskan Bid'ah* (Surabaya: Dunia Ilmu, 1997). Unlike the former, this latter work suggests a looser perspective, allowing a broader tolerance toward certain issues considered by modernist scholars to be strictly forbidden.

[6] Federspiel, ibid., p. 60. See also H.A. Badawi, "Bid'ah dan Churafat Jang Merusak Tauhid," in his *Diktat Peladjaran Kursus/Latihan Pimpinan Muhammadijah di Jogjakarta* (Yogyakarta: PP. Muhammadiyah, 1962), pp. 1-8.

[7] "Laporan Penelitian: Majlis Tarjih Muhammadiyah, Suatu Studi tentang Sistim dan Metode Penentuan Hukum" (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Research dan Survey IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1985), pp. 34-35, 38-39.

[8] As has been discussed in the preceding chapter, the Majlis Tarjih is one of the eight *majlis* or councils in the Muhammadiyah organization. Each of these councils was responsible for executing all programs of the organization into real activities. See *Statutes of the Djamiat Muhammadijah* (Yogyakarta: Faida, 1958), p. 5. For further discussion on the nature and the activity of each council, see Musthafa Kamal et al., *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1988), pp. 52-53. For another discussion on *Tarjih* see Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, pp. 80-83. Noer reported that the function of Majlis Tarjih was to issue *fatwā*, or to ascertain the *hukum* (*al-ḥukm*, legal judgment) of particular questions on which Muslims differed among themselves. The problems did not necessarily deal with ritual or religious practices but might also with non-religious

ritual adherence and social affairs.[8] From its foundation until the 1950s, this council produced a number of treatises, such as *Kitāb ʿAqā'id al-Īmān*, on principal beliefs; *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah*, on ritual purity; *Kitāb al-Janāzah,* on funeral processions; *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, on prayers; *Kitāb al-Zakāh*, on alms giving or religious tax; *Kitāb al-Ṣiyām*, on fasting; *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, on the pilgrimage; *Kitāb al-Waqf*, on religious endowment; and *Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Jumʿat wa'l-Jamāʿah*, on the Friday and congregational prayers.[9] These treatises, which presented the decisions of Majlis Tarjih in formal terms, were subsequently compiled into one book, called *Muqarrarāt Majlis al-Tarjīḥ,* or *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (The Compilation of the Tarjih Decisions).[10] Since these works intended to provide members of the Muhammadiyah with standards for religious beliefs and practices, they require further elaboration in order to illustrate the degree to which the movement wanted its members involved.

A. The Pillars of Belief in the Muhammadiyah

In terms of its doctrinal beliefs, the Muhammadiyah claimed to be proponents of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah (the Followers of the Truth and the Prophet's Tradition), as clearly outlined in its *Kitāb al-Īmān* on basic principles. Although the term Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-

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matters, although the judgment should be based on the *sharīʿah.* Thus questions on the banking system, the scouts' campfire ceremony and clothing found their way into the council. See also, K.H. Sahlan Rasyidi, "Kemuhammadiyahan: Masalah-masalah Tarjih (Bahan Penataran Dosen-dosen Agama Islam/Kemuhammadiyahan)" (n.p., n.d.); H.M. Junus Anis, "Asal-Mula Diadakan Madjlis Tardjih dalam Muhammadijah," in *Suara Muhammadijah*, vol. 52, no. 6 (March 1972), pp. 3 and 13. Sahlan Rasyidi defines the duties of the *Tarjih* as examining, comparing, reconsidering and selecting among all subjects being disputed by the common people due to their different opinions, as to which opinions are regarded to be stronger, more established, more reliable, and closer to the fundamental sources of the doctrines, the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth.

[9] H.M. Junus Anis, "Asal Mula Diadakan Madjlis Tardjih," p. 3.

[10] The Majlis Tarjih was established in 1927. But the first treatises produced by this council, the *Kitāb al-Īmān* and *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* were not authorized until 1929, at the 18th Muhammadiyah Summit Conference in Solo. Basically, the *Tarjih* decisions are written in Arabic with an accompanying Indonesian translation. Following each discussion on a certain subject, some Qur'ānic verses or Ḥadīth texts are cited separately as references or arguments (*dalīl, adillah*). Such an arrangement causes some practical difficulties. Realizing this fact, Abdul Munir Mulkhan tried to reorganize the *Tarjih* materials. He removed the Arabic texts and replaced them with easier explanations in Indonesian, directly followed by some references from the Qur'ān or Ḥadīths. See his *Masalah-masalah Teologi dan Fiqih dalam Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Sipress, 1994).

Sunnah has essentially the same meaning as Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, the Muhammadiyah refers to Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah, which directly evokes the work of al-Ashʿarī. In his *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah* (The Elucidation of the Fundamental Religious Beliefs), al-Ashʿarī noted the importance of the role the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah played in opposing the *ahl al-ziyagh wa'l-bidaʿ*, or the proponents of transgressions and innovations.[11] The Muhammadiyah further emphasizes that the followers of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah, according to a promise of the Prophet, are to be saved from hellfire. Accordingly, the group is known as *al-firqat al-nājiyah* (the secured group).[12] The *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* is entirely devoted to discussing the basic elements of belief according to Muhammadiyah interpretation.[13] It tries first to define the meaning of Islam and *īmān* as fundamental religious doctrines by referring to a Ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, as reported by Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj. Once, the Prophet was sitting among his Companions, when there appeared a man in clean white clothes with very dark hair. Nobody knew where he came from, as he showed no sign of a journey. The people did not notice his arrival until the man sat down very close in front of the Prophet so that their knees touched each other. The man then put his arms on the Prophet's thigh, and began to question him: "Oh Muḥammad, tell me about Islam." The Prophet said, "[Islam is that] you testify that there is no God but

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[11] Al-Ashʿarī dedicated a special chapter to discussing the principal beliefs and characteristics upheld by the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah in his *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1990), pp. 17-24. For the English version of the work, see *Al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah (The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation)*, translated with introduction and notes by Walter C. Klein (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940), pp. 49-55.

[12] Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah Majlis Tarjih, 1976), p. 20. The subsequent discussion on the principles of belief held by the Muhammadiyah will follow the plan laid down in the *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*.

[13] In addition to the *Kitāb al-Īmān* compiled in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, Muhammadiyah's exposition on the principles of belief is also provided by some individual writers, such as K.H. Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik* (reprinted Surabaya, 1970), Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaʿah Bidʿah Khurafat* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1996), H.A. Malik Ahmad, *Akidah, Pembahasan-pembahasan Mengenai Allah dan Taqdir* (Jakarta: al-Hidayah, 1983), H. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), H.A. Azhar Basyir, *Pendidikan Agama Islam I (Akidah)* (Yogyakarta: Perpustakaan Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Indonesia, 1995), and Yunahar Ilyas, *Kuliah Aqidah Islam* (Yogyakarta: LPPI Universitas Muhammadiyah, 1993). I will return to these works later.

Allah, and that Muḥammad is His messenger; you perform prayers, pay the religious tax, fast during the month of Ramaḍān, and undertake the pilgrimage if you are capable." The man replied: "You are right. So tell me about *īmān*." The Prophet said: "*Īmān* is that you believe in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, in the day of resurrection, and in God's decree, either good or bad." The man replied again, "you are right."[14]

After using this Ḥadīth to reaffirm the meaning of Islam and *īmān*, the *Kitāb al-Īmān* embarks on discussing the principal beliefs said to have been approved by the Salaf, or the Pious Predecessors (of the Muslim community). The first principal belief, as dictated by the above Ḥadīth, deals with the belief in God. The discussion on this issue begins with an assessement that the world was created by God from nothing, and is in danger of annihilation (*fanā'*), and that reflection on the universe is obligatory in order to know God. The main statements of belief contained in the *Kitāb al-Īmān* reveal that it is incumbent upon all human beings to believe in Allah, the true God Who has created all beings; and that He is the only necessary being (*wājib al-wujūd*). Accordingly, He is the First without beginning, the Last without ending, and He resembles nothing. He is One in His divinity, as well as His attributes and deeds; the Living, the Everlasting, the Hearing, the Seeing, the Powerful, the Willing, the Knowing, the Speaking. He is perfect, free from any deficiency. He creates whatever He wishes and He is free to decide whatever He chooses (*yakhtār*). Upon His hands are all decrees, and to Him all will return.[15] This statement of belief in God, as the first element of Muslim belief,

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[14] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, pp. 10-11. For the complete citation of the Ḥadīth, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1980), vol. 1, p. 114; Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: ʿIzz al-Dīn, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 64-65. In addition to Islam and *īmān*, the Ḥadīth also discusses the meaning of *iḥsān* or righteousness and the coming of the Last Day. When the Prophet was asked about the meaning of *iḥsān*, he said: "You serve Allah as if He were before your eyes. For if you did not see Him, indeed He sees you." See also A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 32. After that person had left, the Prophet asked ʿUmar, one of those present among his Companions, about the man's identity. Being uncertain about the answer, ʿUmar replied: "Allah and His Messenger know better." The Prophet then told him: "He was Jibrīl (Gabriel), who came to teach you about your religion." It was also reported that the people were amazed because every time the person (Gabriel) asked and then the Prophet answered, the former verified, as if he knew better than the latter.

[15] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, p. 12; Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Masalah-masalah Teologi dan Fiqih*, pp. 167-172.

clearly indicates that the Muhammadiyah accepts the Ashʿarite doctrine in affirming that God has thirteen attributes. Nevertheless, the Muhammadiyah always insisted that it belonged to the Salaf school of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah.[16]

Muhammadiyah doctrine emphasizes that reason must play an important role in understanding who God is and how humanity is obligated to Him. In other words, reason is a vital aspect of religious life. However, since reason is limited in power, it is impossible to know the true reality of God. The divine reality is beyond the scope of the temporal bound of reason. According to the Qurʾān, Allah "knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His except as He willeth." (2:255). The most reason can do is to formulate arguments establishing God's existence. The *Tarjih* decision admits the limits of reason. Consequently it is maintained that God never requires humans to comprehend something that is beyond the capacity of their reason. Yet, God's existence is evident and this is a rationally undeniable truth. The Qurʾān demands that all rational beings decide whether or not there is "a doubt about [the existence of] Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth" (14:10). Therefore, it is imperative for the believers to use their reason to understand what had been created by God, by virtue of which they could prove His existence, His power and His wisdom.[17]

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[16] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 7. For another discussion on the attributes of God see Masʿūd b. ʿUmar Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī on the Creed of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī*, translated with introduction and notes by Earl Edgar Elder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 49-73. Those thirteen attributes are *al-wujūd* (existence), *al-qidam* (eternity), *al-baqāʾ* (everlasting), *al-mukhālafat liʾl-ḥawādith* (nothing can resemble Him), *al-waḥdānīyah* (unity), *al-hayāh* (living), *qiyāmuhu taʿālā bi-nafsih* (self sufficient), *al-samʿ* (hearing), *al-baṣar* (seeing), *al-qudrah* (omnipotent), *al-irādah* (willing), *al-ʿilm* (omniscience), and *al-kalām* (speaking). Although this formulation of the attributes of God is not clearly mentioned in the *Tarjih*, Yusuf affirms that these attributes are similar to that formulated by al-Ashʿarī. Unfortunately he does not identify in which works of al-Ashʿarī this formulation can be located. For further examination of the attributes of God in the Ashʿarite *kalām*, see Michel Allard, *Le Probleme des Attributs Divins dans la Doctrine d'al-Ashʿari et de ses Premiers Grands Disciples* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965), especially pp. 173-285; Richard J. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ashʿarī* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), pp. 6-19.

[17] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 8. Mulkhan, in his *Masalah-masalah Teologi*, asserts that although there are many verses of the Qurʾān encouraging humans to use their reason for reflection, there are also verses emphasizing that reason is limited in power, especially in understanding the nature of God. Moreover, God has decreed that He will not ordain human to do something beyond his capacity, "On

The second element of Muslim belief is the belief in angels. Muslims, as the *Kitāb al-Īmān* testifies, must believe in the existence of angels. They are the venerated servants of God who never violate their obligations, and will devoutly fulfill any duty imposed upon them. They do not eat, drink, sleep or marry. They unceasingly glorify God. Each of them holds a particular task in distinction from the others. There are those who are in charge of holding the throne of God (*al-ʿarsh*), those assigned to be messengers to forward God's messages, and some who are responsible for recording the deeds of humans. The Muhammadiyah maintains that it is not permissible to describe angels except in the manner formulated by religion (especially dealing with their gender as either male or female). The *Kitāb al-Īmān*, therefore, emphasizes that God does not obligate Muslims to know the true nature of the angels. The only obligation is to believe in their existence.[18] Nevertheless, while the prophets were able to see the angels in their original performance, other people were permited to see them only in human form, as can be inferred from the previous Ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.[19]

The third element of belief relates to the scriptures revealed by

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no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear." (2:286). See *Masalah-masalah Teologi*, p. 165. With regard to the assertion that human's intellectual capacity is limited to define the principal beliefs prescribed by the religion, H.A. Badawi concludes that (1) human beings will not be able to know the true nature (*ḥaqīqah*) of Allah, and the way His attributes are ascribed to Him. (2) Human beings have no obligation to know the nature of the angels. (3) Human beings are only ordained to believe in the whole contents of the Qurʾān and sound Ḥadīths; and (4) the extraordinary exploits of the prophets (*muʿjizāt*, miracles) mentioned in the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth must be accepted at their face value. See *Diktat Peladjaran Kursus/Latihan*, p. 1.

[18] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, pp. 13-14. The *Kitāb al-Īmān* refers to "and none can know the forces of thy Lord except He" (74:31). In this passage, the phrase "the forces of thy Lord" (*junūd rabbika*), according to the *Kitāb al-Īmān*, is to be understood as explicitly indicating the angels. In ʿAbdullah Yusuf ʿAli's *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, however, this inference is not so clear. ʿAlī maintains that "the forces of thy Lord" indicates God's "spiritual forces" which are infinite, and no one will be able to know them. See ibid., p. 1560, n. 5797.

[19] See H.A. Azhar Basyir, "Aqidah Islam dan Muhammadiyah," in Sujarwanto, Haedar Nashir and M. Ruslim Karim (eds.), *Muhammadiyah dan Tantangan Masa Depan: Sebuah Dialog Intelektual* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), p. 385. Physically, in the Qurʾān, the angels are characterized as having wings, either two, three, or four pairs. "Praise be to Allah who created the heavens and the earth, who made the angels messengers with wings—two, or three, or four (pairs). He adds to creation as He pleases." (35:1). As has been discussed earlier, in a Ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar, the angel Gabriel appeared in a human form, with clean, white clothes and very dark hair.

God to His messengers. The *Kitāb al-Īmān* asserts that Muslims should believe that God has revealed some Holy Scriptures to His messengers for the betterment of mankind, both in regards to religion and daily life. These divine works are *al-Zabūr* (Psalms) for Dāwūd (David), *al-Tawrāt* (Torah) for Mūsā (Moses), *al-Injīl* (Gospel) for ʿĪsā (Jesus), and *al-Qur'ān* for Muḥammad. The Qur'ān is believed to be the ultimate word of God and thus the final book revealed to mankind. It completes the doctrine, ethics and wisdom that all the previous books contained. The Qur'ān, however, contains some ambiguous verses (*mutashābihāt*). Throughout Islamic history, these passages have been the subject of much theological examination. In dealing with this issue the Muhammadiyah takes a very cautious stance. It begins with the premise that only sound Ḥadīths should be used to decipher the meaning of these verses. By the same token, speculative interpretation is discouraged to be used in analyzing these verses. Accordingly, the Muhammadiyah imposes some strict ordinances to be followed. For instance, the interpreter should never demean the exalted position of God by stating that His nature resembles that of His creatures. Consequently, the literal interpretation of verses that indicate a resemblance of God with His creatures is prohibited, and their explanation should be left to God alone. Yet the right of interpretation is still granted to Muslims as long as it is exercised within the bounds of sound, acceptable reasoning.[20]

The fourth element of Muslim beliefs relates to the nature of prophets. The *Kitāb al-Īmān* asserts that God sent His messengers to give guidance to the human race so that they may follow the straight path. They brought with them good tidings and mortal warnings. This is to be accepted without argument. The messengers of God, however, are ordinary people, except that they are spiritually unique because God has chosen them to convey His revelation. Their truthfulness, intelligence, piety and resolve raised them above all others. Consequently they were endowed with the supreme gift of divine mercy. Nevertheless, they remain entirely human; since, not only do they eat and drink, they are also subject to illness and general suffering, except in ways that would not infringe upon their dignity.[21] The prophets were each fortified with a certain sign (*āyah*) "to prove

[20] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, pp. 15-16. For further discussion on this issue, see infra, n. 74.

[21] Sahlan Rasyidi, "Kemuhammadiyahan: Masalah-masalah Tarjih," p. 11.

their vocation and their sincerity, in such a way that their opponents are silenced."[22] Signs are the indisputable proof of divine agency. Such a sign is commonly known as *mu'jizah*, or "evidentiary miracle," which may disrupt the usual nature of things (*khāriq li'l-'ādah*).[23]

The fifth aspect of Muslim belief is belief in the Last Day (*al-yawm al-ākhir*), which includes the world's destruction, the resurrection, the reckoning (*al-ḥisāb*) and judgement. According to Muhammadiyah's point of view, the Last Day is considered to be the second phase of human life marked by the total destruction of the universe. Following this total destruction, all humankind will be awakened, then collected in the field of *Maḥshar*, where they will be judged in front of the Lord, according to their deeds. They will be either rewarded in paradise or disposed of by hellfire.[24] The Muhammadiyah based this imagery of the Last Day on verses, such as:

> The trumpet shall be sounded when behold! From the sepulchres (men) will rush forth to their Lord. They will say: 'Ah! Woe unto us Who hath raised us up from our beds of repose?' (A voice will say:) 'This is what (Allah) Most Gracious had promised, and true was the word of the messengers.' It will be no more than a single blast. When lo! they will all be brought up before Us (36:51-53).[25]

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[22] A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, p. 224.

[23] See al-Taftāzānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam*, p. 21. Elder, the translator of al-Taftazānī's work, mentions that there are seven stipulations being laid down with regard to the evidentiary miracle. These stipulations include that the miraculous work must (1) originate from God, (2) be able to annul the customary way of things, (3) be impossible for those who contend with God's messenger, (4) appear at the hands of those who claim the prophetic office, (5) be in support of that prophetic claim, (6) substantiate the veracity of prophethood, and (7) not happen before the claim to the prophetic office is made. See, ibid., note 20. In Islamic theology, the tension between the miraculous nature of existence and the manifest laws of nature (known as *sunnat Allāh*), is very crucial. On the one hand, the Qur'ān emphasizes that this *sunnat Allāh* never changes (33:23, 62; 35:43; 48:23). On the other hand, the prophets were allowed to perform some miraculous actions to silence their opponents' argument, by virtue of which the miracle appeared contrary to the laws of nature. The problem is whether or not the miracle could really work against the unchangeable laws of nature. In addition to the term "laws of nature," however, in Muslim literature there is also the term *'ādah*, which, according to Wensinck, is "the customary course of things." It is through *'ādah*, Wensinck explains, that God creates "a series of universals with a certain regularity." Therefore, when God would give support to His prophets in a visible way, He abandons His usual way of recreating the order of things, such as quickening the dead and annihilating mountains. See Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, p. 225.

[24] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 18.

[25] There are some other verses dealing with the Last Day which give clearer indication of its nature. However, they are not referred to by Yusuf in his book. For

With regard to the reckoning (*al-ḥisāb*) the Muhammadiyah refers to another verse: "Oh our Lord! Cover us with Thy forgiveness—me, my parents, and (all) believers, on the Day that reckoning will be established!" (14:41).

The *Kitāb al-Īmān* explains that humans, according to the reckoning of the Last Day, will be divided into three groups: (1) the infidels and the polytheists who will dwell in hellfire eternally, and will never be removed out of it. (2) The believers who failed to comply with their beliefs (*al-ʿāṣūn*). They will dwell in hellfire but, later, will be removed out of it. (3) The true believers who will dwell in paradise eternally.[26] Based on this exposition, the *Kitāb al-Īmān* affirms that Allah has decided the reward and punishment for all people on the Day of Judgement. The punishment for infidels and polytheists is to reside in hellfire forever, based on the Qurʾānic decree: "Those who reject (truth) among the People of the Book and among the polytheists will be in hellfire to dwell therein. They are the worst of creatures." (98:6). Yet dwelling in hellfire is also decreed for believers who did not fulfill their religious obligations completely, as well as the sinners among them, called *al-muʾminūn al-ʿāṣūn*. Nevertheless, though sinners, such persons are not unbelievers and might even aspire to salvation in the life to come.[27] This judgement seems to be based on the Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Saʿīd al-Khudhrī that the Prophet said: "When the dwellers of paradise enter their paradise and the dwellers of hellfire their hellfire, Allah says: 'whoever has a slight amount of belief take him out (of hellfire),' and he will be removed from it."[28] The reward reserved for the true believers is eternal life in Paradise. This promise appears often in the Qurʾān, for example "Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons

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instance: "and verily, the Hour will come; there can be no doubt about it, or about (the fact) that Allah will raise up all who are in the graves." (22:7); "The Trumpet will be (just) sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded, when, behold, they will be standing and looking on." (39:68). In the former verse, the term "Hour," or *al-sāʿah*, is used to indicate that terrifying day.

[26] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, pp. 18-19.

[27] Bernard Lewis, "The Faith and the Faithful," in idem (ed.), *Islam and the Arab World: Faith, People, Culture* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 30.

[28] Quoted in Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 22. The Ḥadīth is narrated by al-Bukhārī. The same account is also provided by H.A. Azhar Basyir, in his *Pendidikan Agama Islam I (Agidah)*, pp. 92-93.

and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): They fight in His cause, and slay and are slain" (9:111); "Their Lord doth give them glad tidings of a mercy from Himself of His good pleasure, and of gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure. They will dwell therein forever. Verily in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest" (9:21-22).[29]

The last element of Muslim belief is the belief in God's decree, called *al-qaḍā' wa'l-qadar*. The *Kitāb al-Īmān* maintains that it is incumbent upon Muslims to believe that Allah has created every existing being, as well as that He ordains and forbids, and that Allah has determined the decree of all things before He created them. He governs the whole universe in accordance with His knowledge, His will and His wisdom. All deeds made by humans are determined by His decree and humans have only to make an endeavor (*ikhtiyār*).[30] In the Muhammadiyah's point of view, *qaḍā'* and *qadar* mean the decree or determination designed by God before He began to create all existing beings; and that God, who is the Most Powerful, governs individual fates through His knowledge, wisdom and will. This idea is based on certain Qur'ānic verses, such as: "No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls, but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence. That is truly easy for Allah" (57:22); "Verily all things have We created in proportion and measure" (54:49); "Thy Lord does create and choose as He pleases. No choice have they (in the matter). Glory to Allah and far is He above the partners they ascribed (to Him)" (28:68). Nevertheless, the *Kitāb al-Īmān* still admits room for human beings to play a role, through the means of "acquisition," or *al-kasb*. All agency is from Allah, and endeavor is required of humans. Human actions, perceived from the

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[29] Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 27. Yusuf also asserts that the position held by the Muhammadiyah, that the believers who did not comply completely with their religious obligations are to be punished in hellfire but ultimately granted paradise, is similar to that maintained by the moderate wing of the Murji'ites. This idea, according to Yusuf, was further developed by al-Ash'arī, before it was fully adopted by the Ahl al-Sunnah. For further discussion on this issue, see Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, pp. 183, 193; W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), especially pp. 140-142.

[30] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, p. 19. *Ikhtiyār*, in Arabic means either "choice" or "free will." But this word has been adopted into Indonesian in a different meaning, that is, "endeavor" or "effort" in addition to "free choice." See John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, 3rd edition (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 218. It is in this Indonesian sense of "endeavor" and "effort" that the word *ikhtiyār* should be understood in this context.

side of Allah, are His creation. Humans are only to arrange what has been granted by God to them in the form of sustenance, health and progeny.[31]

Based on the above considerations, it is clear that humans, according to Muhammadiyah theology, have an opportunity to act out of their own volition. But, considering that God is All Powerful and the Creator of all things, human actions are ultimately the creation of God. This idea is clearly in line with the Ashʿarite theological understanding, that although it is human beings who act, agency is created by God, because God creates all things.[32] After all, the discussion on human actions in relation to the essential unity of an all-powerful God has been an important issue in Islamic theology ever since its formative period. When the Muhammadiyah had to deal with this, it decided to treat it as a special issue and left it out of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*. It is in the hand of individual scholars associated with this organization that the examination of human agency is further developed by the Muhammadiyah. I will return to this issue of human agency in the next part of this chapter, after discussing some attempts to purify religious belief by eradicating supersti-

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[31] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, p. 19.

[32] Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah*, p. 26. The problem of *kasb* or "acquisition" is very crucial in classical Islamic theology. Through this concept, al-Ashʿarī denies free will as well as compulsion, by stating that humans do not produce but "acquire" acts. See A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, p. 92. However, al-Ashʿarī was reported to have adopted this term from Ḍirār b. ʿAmr, a Muʿtazilite scholar who had invented this concept. Disregarding the fact that Ḍirār was one of the leading figures among the Muʿtazilites and the upholder of the belief in "the intermediate position" (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*) as well as his perseverance in the use of rational arguments, he sided with the majority of the general religious movements in believing that all events, including human actions, were determined or controlled by God. This last idea was considered to be the reason for his distinction from the rest of the Muʿtazilites. Through this concept, Ḍirār was trying to reconcile God's omnipotence with His justice in punishing wrongdoers. It would be unjust for God, so he asserts, to punish someone for an act for which he was not responsible. Therefore, every single act of man comes from two different agents, that is, from God who creates it, and from man who "acquires" it (*iktasabahu*). See Watt, *Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 191-192. Since the conception of *kasb* had been invented a long time before the age of al-Ashʿarī, the latter, as reported by Watt, "can have little more than adjust the balance of the various elements in the doctrine as it had been formulated by Burgūth and others of the Ahl al-Ithbāt." See his article "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition," in his *Early Islam: Collected Articles* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 128. This article first appeared in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* (1943), pp. 234-247. See also L. Gardet, "*Kasb*," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edtion, vol. 4, pp. 692-694.

tions, innovations and obscurantism, as outlined by the Muhammadiyah and the Persatuan Islam.

As has been discussed in the earlier part of this sub-chapter, the *Kitāb al-Īmān* tries to provide some principal guidelines of Muslim beliefs that every individual believer has to admit. By referring to the Ḥadīth narrated by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb cited previously, the Muhammadiyah offers the minimum standard of docrtinal beliefs to be fulfilled by devout Muslims. Therefore, the exposition of the issue is made simple, putting forth the statements of beliefs in brief, clear passages, eah of which is based on textual citations from the Holy Scripture. This is obviously different, for instance, from al-Ashʿarī's discussion of the principal beliefs and characteristics of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah in his *al-Ibānah.* Al-Ashʿarī's presentation, to some extent, is uneven and less systematic, though entirely based on direct reference to the Qurʾān. Similarly, it is also different from al-Nasafī's work *al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafīyah*, in which a tendency toward philosophical reasoning is apparent in his presentation.[33] The *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* seems to have laid down the foundation for other discussions of Islamic principal beliefs, which is better known later as *ʿilm al-tawḥīd*, or the science of God's unity, to be distinguished from the *ʿilm al-kalām*, or dialectical theology. Like in other parts of the Muslim world, Indonesian Muslim scholars also follow this two-fold trend in developing their theological discourse, as will be discussed later.

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[33] For a comprehensive examination of al-Nasafī's work see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16th Century Malay Translation of the ʿAqāʾid of al-Nasafī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1988). In his lengthy introduction, al-Attas, among other things, suggests that al-Nasafī's work was used as a textbook for advanced students in the articles of Islamic belief. Its concise and well-knit phrasing summerizes the fundamental aspects of Muslim creed, arising from the consensus of the learned, which emerged after long controversies among theologians, philosophers, Sufis and sectarians. See ibid., p. 16. The work became popular throughout the Muslim world, and witnessed a number of commentaries, the most well-known of which is presented by Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd b. ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafīyah* (Dersaadet: Sirket-i Sahafiye-yi Osmaniye Matbaasi, 1908). For the English translation, see Earl Edgar Elder, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam*, cited previously. For a more recent commentary on al-Nasafī's work, see ʿAbd al-Malik ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī, *Sharḥ al-Nasafīyah fi'l-ʿAqāʾid al-Islāmīyah* (Baghdad: Dār al-Maktabat al-Anbār, 1988).

B. K.H. Mas Mansoer: Purifying Muslims' Belief

Faith, or *īmān*, according the Muhammadiyah's point of view, bears certain consequences for Muslims. It means that the expression of *īmān* should be in the form of good actions. True believers must care about the welfare of others within the community. They should always be willing to sacrifice some of their wealth in the way of Allah. Through this injunction, they should employ their material resources for the good of all, especially for those who are stricken with poverty.[34] The poor material conditions suffered by Muslims in early twentieth century Indonesia incited some Muhammadiyah thinkers to occupy themselves with this problem. Mas Mansoer (1896-1946), a prominent figure of the Muhammadiyah in its formative period,[35] was very concerned with the social conditions around him. He was convinced that Muslims suffered due to their weak beliefs, ignorance, and selfishness. These deficiencies prevented Muslims from improving their religious practice and thereby obtaining a true understanding of Islam. Furthermore, this miserable situation allowed those who disliked Islam to show their contempt for it, and undermine its dignity.[36] On the other hand, many Muslims became indifferent to

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[34] Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[35] K.H. (Kyai Haji) Mas Mansoer was born in Surabaya, in 1896. He joined the Muhammadiyah when he was quite young during his frequent visits to Yogyakarta, the cradle home of the movement. But his acquintance with the Muhammadiyah had begun when K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the organization, visited Surabaya several times. There Dahlan conducted his *tablīgh*, or summoning people to Islam. Many people were attracted to join his *tablīgh*, including Sukarno, the first president of the country, and Ruslan Abdul Gani, one of the nationalist leaders. When the Muhammadiyah chapter of Surabaya was established, Mansoer was appointed as its leader. But due to his brilliant leadership talent and his broad insight, he was nominated as the general chairman of the Muhammadiyah central board, in 1937. Under his leadership, the Muhammadiyah grew more vigorously. Mansoer was also well known for his concept of the twelve interpretations of the Muhammadiyah's plan (*12 Tafsir Langkah Muhammadiyah*). For his biography, see H. Djarnawi Hadikusuma, *Matahari-matahari Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1980), pp. 37-60. For his concept of the twelve interpretations, see his *12 Tafsir Langkah Muhammadiyah*, ed. by Abdul Munir Mulkhan (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1973). For another discussion of his religious worldview, see Syaifullah, "Sikap dan Pandangan Hidup Kyai Haji Mas Mansoer" (*Skripsi* IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, 1985).

[36] An incident in 1918, known as "*Djawi Hisworo* affair" is illustrative. *Djawi Hisworo* was a Javanese daily published in Solo, Central Java, of the early twentieth century. An article written by two writers with the pseudonyms of Martodharsono and Djokodikoro was issued in this daily, 9 and 11 January 1918. It was considered

their misery and accepted it as an inescapable fate. Mas Mansoer suggested that to ameliorate their condition, Muslims should return to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth so that they could rediscover the true Islamic spirit and implement them in daily life. Mansoer also emphasized that Muslims had to expend material wealth to improve their public welfare, and he encouraged cooperation between the *'ulamā'* and intellectuals for the benefit of religion, community and nation.[37]

The main concern of Mansoer in the field of religious reform was to eradicate the elements of polytheism, or *shirk*, from Muslim belief. His goal was to reaffirm *tawḥīd* or belief in God's oneness. In the *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, a treatise written in the late 1930s, Mansoer maintained that the inclusion of elements of thought and practice associated with polytheism had gravely desecrated Islam. This was the root cause of Muslim weakness and backwardness. He reminded his fellow Muslims that the earlier community after the Prophet was triumphant and prosperous because it had held true to *īmān*. In recent times, however, glory turned into misery and defeat. It does not mean that the challenges that contemporary Muslims had to counter were greater than those of earlier Muslims. Their current misfortune, according to Mansoer, was due to their negligence of religious obligations. Mansoer asked critically: "Why should Muslims who claimed to have followed the straight path be defeated by their enemies? Were not the challenges faced by the earlier Muslims

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blasphemous for slandering the Prophet Muhammad as being a "drunkard" and an "opium smoker." Muslims were deeply insulted. In a meeting held in Surabaya in the following month they expressed their anger against the writers and the daily's editors. They also demanded that the government take a serious action against these "violators of peace and order." A committee, called Tentara Nabi Muhammad (Army of the Prophet Muhammad) was then established to unify all Muslims physically and spiritually to protect the honor of Islam, of the Prophet and of the Muslims. Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, pp. 127-128.

[37] A. Jainuri, "The Formation of Muhammadiyah's Ideology, 1912-1942." (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1997), pp. 138-139. Mas Mansoer wrote several articles in which he articulated his deep concern for the poor social condition of his fellow Muslims. The articles were published in journals, like *Adil, Pedoman Masjarakat, Soeara MIAI, Pandji Islam, Siaran,* etc. In a series for *Adil*, for instance, he examined some factors that allowed Muslims to sink into backwardness in the following articles: "Sebab-sebab Kemunduran Ummat Islam," (25 September 1941); "Sebab-sebab Kemiskinan Rakjat Islam Indonesia," (16-18 May 1940); and "Mendjelaskan Faham Saja," (27 July 1940). Some of Mas Mansoer's articles published in those journals have been compiled into a book edited by Amir Hamzah Wiryosukarto, *Kiyai Haji Mas Mansur: Kumpulan Karangan Tersiar* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1992). For the above noted articles, see pp. 145-157.

greater and more severe than ours today?" Mansoer provided an answer to his own query by stating that earlier Muslims had devoted themselves completely to Allah alone, and were not afraid of anything except violating His prohibitions and neglecting His commands.[38]

Mansoer maintained that compared to their magnificent forefathers, Muslims had become weak in their belief and less fervent in their religious obligations, largely because the disease of *shirk*, or polytheism, was rampant.[39] *Shirk* weakened their belief and made them lazy, which in turn led to their poverty and ignorance. Some people, albeit unconsciously, propagated polytheism, due to their lack of rigour in maintaining the proper path of God. While Muslims in the past zealously avoided polytheism and made all attempts to eradicate it, some contemporary Muslims, however, uncaringly drew close to it, or even encouraged others to adopt it. They were unaware that their practices violated the most serious prohibition set down by God. *Shirk* is the gravest of sins. Its eradication was the primary purpose of revelation. The propagators of *shirk*, according to Mansoer, were the enemies of God, since when God ordained to obliterate polytheism they provoked other people to do otherwise. Therefore, Mansoer insisted that every member of the Muhammadiyah should do his best to abolish all elements of polytheism from their faith.[40]

To support his argument, Mansoer, first of all, distinguished between the "real" or the "evident" (*al-zāhir*) from the "invisible" or "hidden" (*al-ghā'ib*). In regular terms, people must fulfill their daily

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[38] K. H. Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik* (Surabaya: Peneleh, 1970), pp. 6-7.

[39] To this extent, Mas Mansoer might have reflected the spirit of al-Amīr Shakīb Arslan (1869-1946) in his work *Limādhā Ta'akhar al-Muslimūn wa-Taqaddama Ghayruhum* (Why Muslims were in backwardness while others were in progress). The work has been translated into Indonesian by Moenawar Chalil, entitled *Mengapa Kaum Muslimin Mundur dan Mengapa Kaum Selain Mereka Maju?*, first appeared in 1954. Since then the work has seen several reprints. For this I refer to the fourth reprint (1976). According to Arslan, the backwardness of the contemporary Muslims was due, among the others, to their negligence of their religious zeal such as the one dictated by the Qur'ān, 9:111, "Allah has purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise). They fight in His cause and slay and are slain. A promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'ān: and who is more faithful to His Covenant than Allah?" Muslims have to revive this spirit and transform themselves to meet the Qur'ānic injunction that "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves" (13:11). See *Mengapa Kaum Muslimin Mundur dan Mengapa Kaum Selain Mereka Maju?* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1976), pp. 24-28.

[40] Ibid., p. 8.

needs by employing all the material means they have at their disposal such as tools, appliances, utensils, and physical supports from other people. But when this fails, people usually turn themselves to the support of "hidden" or supernatural power (*kekuatan ghaib*). In exercising their physical capacity, people work according to their skill and power. But when they seek on supernatural power, they can only request its help and favor. According to Mansoer, this mystical power is considered much stronger and more effective in fulfilling the people's requests. But he further emphasizes that the strongest supernatural force is God alone. People will turn to this supernatural power when they feel that their physical and ordinary efforts are fruitless, or when they see that there is no other way to fulfill their urgent needs in the regular manner.[41]

Mansoer asserted that the belief in the existence of supernatural intervention had easily led people to polytheism. Certain people claimed that for a fee, they could influence the supernatural for certain purposes, either good or bad. However, Mansoer tried to discredit this tendency on rational grounds so that his fellow Muslims would not succumb to such beliefs. He insisted that in reality, the so-called supernatural was not really mystical, since it could be examined critically and mastered through regular practice. The examples he mentioned were hypnotism and magical shows, which are in no way mystical, as any person could practice them insofar as he or she had a skill or talent (*istiˇdād*) for it. At the time of Mansoer, when the Western products of technology were still very scarce and even deemed odd or strange, many people equated modern technology with mystical powers. It was hard for them to believe that such things were merely man-made and governed by natural laws. Mansoer mentioned the radio as an example. People could not accept that this object was able to express the voice or song of persons in a far off region. To their way of thinking, there had to be a mysterious power occupying that object. A radio was well beyond their cultural frame of reference. For them, odd things, like irregular trees or unusual rocks, were interpreted as signs of special power. Mansoer reminded Muslims that they should avoid such beliefs. Such objects were merely physical entities having a lower degree of existence than human, and they did not hold any supernatural power. Real mystical power

[41] Ibid., p. 9.

belonged to Allah alone, who had created the whole universe and ruled it.[42]

Although Mansoer's work, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, was supposed to deal evenly with the problems of *tawḥīd* (oneness of God) and *shirk* (polytheism), it is almost entirely devoted to discussing *shirk*. Concerning *tawḥīd*, it only gives a short account of its meaning, saying that those who upheld this truth should affirm the existence of God and submit to His will. *Tawḥīd* recognizes the Creator and the Ruler of the universe. Nothing is more powerful than He, and every existing being owes its existence to Him.[43] There is no further explanation as to why he confines his exposition of *tawḥīd* only to this brief description. The rest of the book is devoted to examining *shirk*.

With regard to people's attitude toward *shirk*, Mansoer divided them into three groups: (1) Those who believed in the existence of God as the all powerful being, but who associated their belief with an idea that there were other influential beings sharing His power. (2) Those who believed that certain objects such as statues or graves could mediate human's requests to God. (3) Those who believed that God was not one but many. Unfortunately Mansoer did not further elaborate these types of *shirk*. Instead he moved on to an analysis of particular objects, excessive veneration of which might lead to polytheism: (1) The graves and the spirits of deceased persons; (2) eerie objects or places; and (3) shamanism. His discussion of *shirk* is then directed to follow this plan.

The belief in the power of the dead person's spirit. According to Mansoer, this type of *shirk* had been practiced by people prior to the time of the Prophet Noah or Nūḥ. Initially, there were some highly venerated people believed to be very close to God due to their deep piety and devotion. People asked their help to implore God for their worldly interests. After these individuals died, people still maintained a belief in their power. Their graves functioned as a conduit for their requests to God. Such veneration lead to an exaggerated degree of worshipping their graves instead of God. God then sent Noah as His messenger to remind people against such blasphemy and to bring them back to the straight path.[44]

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[42] Ibid., p. 10.

[43] Ibid., p. 11.

[44] According to Ibn Taymīyah, polytheism as described by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah is of two kinds: the polytheism upheld at the time of Noah, and that upheld at the time of Abraham. The first, similar to that stated by Mansoer above, is based

With regard to Indonesia, Mansoer examined some similar practices held by his fellow countrymen which he categorized as obvious *shirk*. He pointed to the common practice of visiting certain venerated graves. Local custom maintained that the spirit of the deceased could convey requests to God. Mansoer relates a story of a man whose wife and child were severely sick. He had become very frustrated since all his efforts to cure them were to no avail. Finally a friend of his advised him to visit a certain venerated grave in his village and to solicit its favor. Mansoer explains how the man came to this grave in total humility. Bowing and with deep respect, he approached the gravestone. He touched it solemnly while soliciting its blessing for his family. There seemed to have been many people doing this before, since many flower petals were amassed around it. Obviously the grave was highly respected. Many requests were made, not only to cure diseases but also to garner wealth, find love, and to improve one's fortune. The man then took some of the flower petals, but he grabbed from the deepest layer mixed with some soil. He wrapped this handful with his handkerchief and brought it home. He put some of it in a glass of water and gave it to his sick wife and child to drink, in the manner his friend had instructed him to do. Curiously, Mansoer does not narrate this story to its conclusion. One is left to assume that it was so obviously misguided that its ineffectiveness is beyond doubt.[45] Mansoer's primary concern was not medical, but theological. Such a practice was evidently *shirk*, since the man had surrendered himself to the spirit of the dead in a bid to gain supernatural power, and thereby seen something other than God as instrumental in healing.

Mansoer then proceeds to examine how this practice could be rationally criticized as heretical. The grave, asserts Mansoer, was a place for burying the dead. It has no power or merit at all, even if it did belong to the most pious and powerful of man during his life. Mansoer asks:

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on an exaggerated veneration of graves of their saints and their erection of statues resembling them which turned to be objects of worship. The second was based on worshipping stars, sun and moon. Ibn Taymīyah further emphasized that all were worshippers of Satan and Jinni who encouraged them to maintain their polytheism. See Ibn Taymīyah, *Qā'idah Jalīlah fī al-Tawassul wa-l-Wasīlah*, edited by al-Sayyed Jamīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1985), p. 29.

[45] Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, pp. 18-19.

> Is it appropriate for those who are alive and have real power to do his work to ask for help of a body buried in grave? Who is more perfect, the dead person or the living one? Who says that the dead person is more powerful than the living one? If anybody would say so, let him die now, since his death will give him more power and merit. If the dead person could help the living, certainly there would be no misery in this world, no one would fall sick or experience any suffering, since every dead person would help his or her members of family to be saved from all of them.[46]

But in reality, continued Mansoer, miseries are very common among people. If the spirits of all the pious Muslims since the time of the Prophet could indeed extend aid to their fellow living Muslims, the community of believers would not be plagued by misery, poverty and backwardness. Yet almost all Muslim people, at the time of Mansoer, were under Western imperial domination. Therefore, the belief that the spirit of the dead held supernatural power over the fate of the living was not only *shirk*. It was manifestly false.[47]

The power of eerie objects and places. Human's inclination to seek help from supernatural power was not confined to the graves or the spirits of the deceased. Certain unusual objects or astonishing spots were thought to be occupied by a power, commonly known as *makhluk halus* or, literally, the "invisible-delicate creature." More specifically, in Javanese terms, they were spirits called *memedi, wedon, tuyul,* and *demit*, which might dwell in an extraordinarily large tree, a strange rock, very old heirlooms, and ancient statues. Mansoer strongly opposed this belief and tried to repudiate it through reason. "How could people believe that such freakish objects were occupied by spiritual powers and gave favor to them?" Mansoer insisted that such belief was false and mere delusion. When people were astonished by an extraordinarily large tree, they should not consider it as occupied by a supernatural being. Despite its ghostly appearance, they should remind themselves that a big tree is only a creation of the almighty God who creates as He wishes. Submission is to God alone not to mere tree; a plant that He had created. But some people exaggerate the image of the big tree. The ghostly spot on which the tree stands is proclaimed holy ground. It becomes a focus for soliciting favor. Since, according to Mansoer, all such beliefs are false, the real benefit

[46] Ibid., p. 19.
[47] Ibid., p. 21.

is taken by the guardians of the spot who receive gratuitously the offerings presented by the visitors.[48]

Similar treatment was given to the belief that a statue could be occupied by a supernatural power. Often, this power was thought to be the spirit of a deceased person. In Hindu tradition, said Mansoer, the body of the deceased had to be burnt in a crematorium, after which the ashes would be buried in a designated place. Usually, when it happened to be a king or a venerated public figure, a statue personifying the deceased was erected upon that spot as a symbol of veneration. However, people subsequently assumed that the statue was not merely a physical object. It was transformed into a spiritually powerful entity deserving veneration. Thus people began to come to solicit its favor by offering flower petals, burning incense, or performing communal feast (*slametan*) near by the spot. Over time the area became a sanctuary.[49] As the spirit of the deceased was believed to have dwelled in the statue, the people assumed that the statue functioned as a medium to convey their requests to God the almighty. Such belief was, according to Mansoer, similar to that maintained by Meccan people prior to the rise of Islam. Although they claimed to believe in God, they persistently worshipped idols that were erected around the holy shrine at Mecca, due to their conviction that the idols were intermediaries between the devout and the supreme Deity.[50]

A further illustration of this issue was made by Mansoer in his discussion of a haunted house.[51] Mansoer referred to a story set in 1931-1932, in Surabaya. There was a large, old, house believed to

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[48] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[49] In the old Javanese tradition, the graves of the ancestors were considered a place of contact where the living relatives and descendants performed symbolic communication with the spirit of the dead. On the other hand, the graves of the first settler of a village gained high veneration and usually functioned as a local sanctuary called *pepunden*, where certain traditional rituals, like *bersih desa* and *nyadran*, were undertaken. See, Koentjaraningrat, *The Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.331, 341. *Bersih desa* means "cleansing the village community" by virtue of which it will be freed from evil, malevolent spirits, disaster, and from all causes of misfortunes. Ibid., p. 375. *Nyadran* or *nyekar* means to visit the ancestral graves on the day before the members of a family undertake rites of passage, such as circumcision and marriage, or before taking a long journey.

[50] The Meccan tradition of worshipping idols as medium to intensify their devotion to God is recorded in the Qur'ān, 39:3: "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah."

[51] Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, pp. 37-42.

be possessed. Nobody wanted to rent it despite its very low price. But one day a government official who moved to the city for his new job had no choice but to live in this big, old house. He moved into it together with a friend. During the first night they lived there, they were frightened by a loud, unidentified voice. Later, when they began to perform the evening prayer, the sound of a big stone dropped upon the roof under which they were standing was heard. The men then sat down for a while asking God to protect them from Satan until they completed their prayer. Once completed, a noisy voice began to terrify them while more stones hit the roof making horrifying bangs. Terrified and deeply sad, they discussed what they could do to overcome the problem. The friend, who seemed to be more pious, suggested that the best thing to do was to surrender to God's mercy and trust Him to protect them. They decided to spend the night in supererogatory prayers. Although the haunting continued for several nights, they kept performing their prayers asking God's refuge. Finally their request was fulfilled and the evil was silenced.

For a while, the two men enjoyed some peace in the house. However, the soft menacing voice returned and stones began to fall on the roof. Something wrong must have taken place, thought the pious friend. When he asked the man about anything he may have had done, the man answered that he had visited a former teacher of his that day. He talked to him about the house and the problems they experienced during the first days they were there. The teacher, a practitioner of mystical belief, advised him to place some inscriptions he was going to make for him in all four corners of the house. This would guard it against Satan's power. But when he did so, the evil spirit returned immediately. Realizing the mistake, the pious friend reminded the man that he had betrayed his trust in God's power. His teacher's advice had violated *tawḥīd*. He told him to remove the inscriptions and burn them. They then returned to their supererogatory prayers, asking God's forgiveness and protection. Finally the spirit was silenced and they regained their peaceful home.

With this story Mansoer attempts to illustrate that true Muslims could overcome disturbances caused by supernatural power provided that they maintain sincere belief in the absolute power of God and do not desecrate it with those practices prohibited by Him. Faith had banished evil from the house but after the man looked to his former teacher for further protection, trust in God was broken and the spirit returned. The story continues with the teacher offering to redeem his failure by offering the man a handful of salt to be

spread out over the roof. This was sure to stop the stones falling from Satan's hand. Once again the man accepted his mystical teacher's advice. But again, the terrifying spirit came back more terrible than before. When his friend asked him if he could have done anything to allow the spirit to return, he confessed to the salt. This time, however, he said that he did not actually believe his former teacher's advice, but had followed it only out of politeness and respect. To restore peace they returned to God. Yet before it was completely silenced, the voice warned that they need to hold a communal feast (*slametan*) at the house, or otherwise they would be tormented continuously. Upon hearing this warning, the man consulted his pious friend about what they should do. The friend reminded him saying:

> We are Muslims, and we have guidance from God, that is, the Qur'ān. But there is no single verse in the Qur'ān that ordains us to undertake the *slametan*. Therefore there is no need to follow it, and we should not feel afraid of it, since what the voice orders us to do is against the Qur'ān. It is also impossible to think that the voice came from an angle whose only job is to obey God. The voice must have come from Satan who tried to delude us.[52]

By assuring themselves that they should ignore the warning from the voice, the two men readied themselves to counter whatever risks they might face. When night fell and they had finished their evening prayer, the spirit returned in truly terrifying form. Finally it stopped after two o'clock in the morning. But the two friends continued in their supererogatory prayers and would not surrender to the demand to undertake the *slametan*. The following night, they invited some friends in order to witness the power of this terrible spirit. Together they met the fury of the spirit until once again at two o'clock in the morning, when it ended with a very violent bang, like a thunderclap. Amazingly, the noise was not heard outside the house at all. On the third night the visitors came again to see if they would experience

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[52] Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, p. 41. The story, had it really happened, reflects Mansoer's puritan stance against popular practices such as *slametan*. As has been discussed earlier in the preceding chapter, this *slametan* casts back the widespread belief in spirits, for which performing such a ritual is meant to placate. Held at key points in one's life or in the (communal) life of the village, this ritual also expresses Javanese vague acceptance of a world influenced by spiritual forces. See Joseph Tamney, "Modernization and Religious Purification: Islam in Indonesia." *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 22, no. 2 (December 1980), p. 210. Mansoer, like other Muhammadiyah leaders, worked hard to convince his fellow Muslims to abandon such a practice and belief.

the same thing. But unlike the night before, they did not hear any noise even though they had been waiting for it until late at night. Similarly, when they came again on the following nights the noise was not heard.

The narration of this story allows Mansoer to emphasize the point that truthful believers are able to overcome supernatural power through purifying *īmān*. The Satan and Jinni, according to Mansoer, are inferior to those who hold a firm belief in God and who are not easily distressed by their disturbances. The story also intends to illustrate that certain beliefs, such as the use of salt or performing *slametan* to evade the bad influence of supernatural power, are false. Mansoer maintains that people hold to such beliefs only because they desire material gain or social status among unlearned people. The true Muslim should surrender to God alone, and ignore the ways of Satan. If a Muslim is afraid of Satan and submits himself to his will, it means that he does not fear God. Through his annoyance Satan intends to subjugate men to be his supporters, whereas Islam determines that Satan is their adversary.

The belief in shamanism. Shamanism is also based on a belief in supernatural power and an invisible world of gods, demons and ancestral spirits.[53] But in Javanese terms it can include the broader concept of *dukun*. In its regular sense, this term means "traditional curer," with some specification, like *dukun bayi* (traditional midwives), *dukun paes* (who help brides with their costumes and make-up), *dukun tetak* (circumcisors), and *dukun pijet* (massagers). Thus they are not strictly against religious doctrine. Accordingly, not all types of this

[53] In general, shamanism can be characterized as "practices and beliefs that center on communication with the spirits of nature and the spirits of the dead through the ritualized possession of a shaman who serves as a spirit medium." See Jonathan Z. Smith, *The Harpercollins Dictionary of Religion* (New York: Harper- Collins, 1995), p. 979. Originally, shaman is the name attributed by the Tungus of Siberia to ritual practitioners who are believed to act as intermediaries with the spirit world. While in ecstatic state, the shamans claim themselves to be able to journey to the realm of the spirits, seeking help as a healer or seer. See John R. Hinnels, *A New Dictionary of Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 466. The word is now used more broadly indicating people who enter trance and ecstatic states, and are able to make "out of body journeys" either to upper or (more frequently) lower worlds, as a part of the shaman's healing practices. To sum up, the term shaman refers to a person, male or female, who has mastered spirits, and at his or her will can introduce these spirits for a special interest, particularly in helping other people who suffer from the spirits. See John Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 884.

practice are regarded as forbidden by Islam. But Mansoer mentions five types of *dukun*: (1) the magician, (2) the numerologist, (3) the meditator, (4) the astrologist, and (5) shamanism based on the help of Satan and Jinni.[54] But for simplicity, I would like to highlight only three of them: the magician, the numerologist, and shamanism based on the help of Satan and Jinni.

The magician, Mansoer suggests, only deceives people with adept tricks and his limited knowledge of medicine. This art, which conveys the idea of influencing course of events by occult control of nature or of spirits, is enough to amaze common people. In practice, the magician attests to a special knowledge of supernatural power. In his "medical treatment," the magician usually did not directly indicate the type of disease afflicting the patient. In the course of his examination, he might say that it was not a regular disease but one caused by a certain supernatural being or caused by somebody else who wished him ill. The magician then determines that some foreign things had mysteriously entered the body and that it should be extricated, otherwise the patient would soon die. The patient is then requested to come again on a specified day with some offerings demanded by the magician. On that day, the magician, after silently reciting some magical formula while nodding his head, begins to extract the "disease" from the body of the patient. Needles, nails, small pieces of broken glass, and so on would be produced.[55] But, for Mansoer, none of this can possibly be true. It was only a trick made by the magician to deceive people who were easily amazed by such magical skills. He further reminded his fellow Muslims not to be the targets of such deception. Falling victim to the lies of the shaman would

[54] Clifford Geertz has an extensive discussion on this subject in his work *The Religion of Java*, in which he devoted a special chapter to discussing it, under the title "Curing, Sorcery and Magic" (pp. 86-111). For Geertz, the belief in *dukun* occupies a third of the most general subcategories of *abangan* religion after the spirit beliefs and *slametans*. However, it is inaccurate to assume that the belief in *dukuns* is restricted to the *abangans*. Both belief and disbelief in the power of *dukun*s, according to Geertz, are spread throughout Javanese society, among *priyayis, santris,* and *abangans* alike, although this belief is more predominantly an *abangan* phenomenon. In addition to those mentioned above, Geertz lists different kinds of *dukuns*, such as *dukun wiwit*, harvest ritual specialists; *dukun sihir,* sorcerers; *dukun susuk*, specialists who cure by inserting golden needles under the skin; *dukun siwer,* specialists in preventing natural misfortune (keeping the rain away when one is having a big feast, etc.); *dukun tiban*, curers whose powers are temporary and the result of their having been entered by a spirit. See ibid., p. 86.

[55] Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, p. 46.

harm them in the Hereafter. God punishes those inclined toward polytheism.

Mansoer also considers numerology (*perhitungan* or *petungan*) to be a practice prohibited by God. The shaman with this expertise, called *dukun petungan,* predicts the fate of people. They determine the best date to undertake an important enterprise, such as marriage, taking a long journey, building a new house, or moving to some new place. With their particular skill in calendrical calculation, the *dukun* also determine whether or not a betrothed couple might securely proceed to marriage.[56] According to Mansoer, there were many people, who due to their faith in the numerical calculation of the *dukun*, cancelled marriages. The *dukun* told an otherwise happy couple that if they proceeded to marriage, they would only know unhappiness. Similarly a person who intended to start a new business or to make a long journey, due to his belief in the *dukun*'s numerical calculation, would cancel or postpone perfectly sound plans. Mansoer acknowledged that some of the predictions made by the *dukun* were indeed correct, but these incidents were dismissed as incidental chance. Yet people seemed more impressed by these exceptions than the pattern of failure.

With regard to shamanic practice based on the help of Satan or Jinni, Mansoer stated that this type of shamanism was very common among the people of his age. The shaman mystically consulted Satan and Jinni, usually by means of a glass or a bowl of water with some flower petals on it and burning incense, which is reminiscent of Hindu practices. After spelling some magical formula inviting Satan

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[56] Specialists in Javanese numerology (*dukun petungan*) up to now still practice and give assistance to those who consult them. In marriage, for instance, parents in rural Java will consult the *dukun* whether their daughter could marry a young man she loves. The *dukun* will refer to the birth dates of both girl and boy, including three kinds of chronological tables of the old pre-Islamic Javanese, the Islamic, and Christian calendars, known as *weton*. He then combines them and will find a certain figure that can be used to be the basis of decision. It is frequently reported that parents oblige a daughter of theirs to marry a boy whom she does not know at all, but, based on *weton* numerology approved by the *dukun*, the parents are convinced that it will bring good luck. See "Rujukan: Hari Mujur/Sial," *Republika Online*, 20 August 1999, as quoted from http://www.republika.co.id. See also Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, p. 127. For further discussion on Javanese numerological system, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, pp. 30-35. A more comprehensive account of the application of this Javanese numerological system in one's passage of life is provided by Marbangun Hardjowirogo, *Adat Istiadat Jawa Sedari Seseorang Masih dalam Kandungan hingga Sesudah Ia Tiada Lagi* (Bandung: Patma, 1980).

and Jinni to come, the shaman would collapse. Then, seemingly unconscious, he began to speak. His voice turned very strange, unlike his regular one. Sometimes it was like that of a child just beginning to talk. Sometimes it was deep and wise. At that moment, he was believed to be in a trance and possessed by a supernatural power. The client would then make a request about a disease to be cured, some valuable property either lost or stolen, or future luck or loves. They usually trusted the spell of the shaman, because it did not seem to be of this world.[57]

Similar to the Satan and Jinni, in Javanese belief there is another supernatural being called *ṭuyul*. The *ṭuyul* is believed to be a spirit who will do the bidding of anyone who can control it. It is usually characterized as a little child or dwarf. This being can be very instrumental in making a person rich, most frequently accomplished by stealing other people's property. Thus someone who suddenly becomes very rich is, in Javanese tradition, accused of possessing a *ṭuyul* to help him accumulate the wealth. According to Koentjaraningrat, one can control the *ṭuyul* spirits through the help of sorcerers, by fasting, or undertaking painful ascetic exercises and meditation at various haunted spots or sanctuaries. However, the *ṭuyul* spirits demand favors in return for their service. Once under control, they require constant attention and care. This involves regular offerings, as a failure to meet its needs will cause great harm. The man who controls them does so at great risk despite the offerings: "he may have to risk the death of a dear relative, a shorter life, or have the prospect of a slow and difficult death."[58]

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[57] Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, pp. 58-59.

[58] Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*, p. 341. Although Mansoer was quite irritated by the belief in Satan and Jinni held by people of his age and tried to convince his fellow Muslims to abandon it, such beliefs remain prevalent. At the time of crisis overwhelming Indonesia since late 1997, the belief in supernatural power reemerged among people. They seek refuge from distress and insecurity. This trend cuts across educational degree, social class or economic background. A number of specialists in the so-called *paranormal* enterprise are suddenly well known: Mudrika, Putri Wong Kam Fu, Mama Terate, Nyonya Lauren, Ki Ageng Selo, Yasin Assiry, Ki Gendeng Pamungkas, and several others. All of them claimed that demand for their expertise greatly improved during the time of crisis. One of them proudly claimed that seventy-percent of his clients come from the business class. It is of course ironic that in approaching the end of the second millenium highly educated people and well-to-do businessmen are believers in supernatural power. A sociology lecturer at the University of Indonesia said characterizing those people as suffering from split personality, in the sense that in spite of their high education and social status, in a state of

It seems evident that Mansoer's work was not intended to serve as an academic reader, but merely to protect Muslims' religious belief from the elements of polytheism (*shirk*) in popular practice. The work originated from the notes of his lectures in a religious course delivered to his Muhammadiyah followers in Surabaya, in the early 1930s.[59] Mansoer's exposition was also less exhaustive in examining the issue of polytheism, which seemed to be based on his own perception of the empirical facts overwhelmingly dominating Muslims' religious practice in his age; that is, their inclination toward a belief in supernatural powers. By contrast, Mansoer's examination was mostly based on reason rather than on doctrinal arguments. In the course of work, he quotes, for instance, only a few verses from the Qur'ān. Even these were not directly relating to a specific topics, but only general ones, such as the prohibition against polytheism (3:46), the command to worship God alone and not to associate Him with anything else (16:36, 51:56), and the decree that there is only one God (21:25).[60] Mansoer ends his work with an assertion that it is not suitable for a Muslim to ask help from Satan and Jinni, who only delude and lead people to deviance. He also maintains that submitting one's affairs to a *dukun* means equally submitting oneself to the will of Satan and Jinni. People who solicited the *dukun*, graves, haunted spots, and other extraordinary things will find nothing but

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distress, they overtly manifest an irrational personality. "In the midst of confusion and distress, in which words mean nothing but spells having magical force, when personality grows irrational, and when sound reasoning is relinquished, the *dukuns* play their role, also with words and spells." See "Mantra di Tengah Krisis." *Kompas Online*, 19 February 1998, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com/9802/19/UTAMA/mant.htm. The same concern is also expressed by Nurcholish Madjid and Rusdi Muchtar of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia—LIPI). They maintained that although many of Indonesian people today live in modern style—possessing handphones, travelling abroad frequently, and enjoying delicious dinners in expensive restaurants—every year they still make offerings, burn incense in their ancestors' sanctuaries, and request the advice of *dukuns*. See "Masyarakat Indonesia Belum Beranjak dari Tradisionalisme," *Republika Online*, 31 August 1999, as quoted from http://www.republika.co.id. The value of Indonesian currency, the rupiah, decreased very sharply due to the economic and political turmoil following Suharto's stepping down from his 32 year presidency in the mid-1998. The rupiah has recorded its lowest rate as 15.100 rupiah for each U.S. dollar, as of 1 July 1998. See "Ketidakpastian Program Ekonomi Penyebab Utama Kurs Rupiah Anjlok." *Kompas Online*, 12 May 2000, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com/…0005/12/UTAMA/peny01.htm.

[59] See the publisher's note in the preface of the book, [p. iii].

[60] Mansoer quoted these verses on a separate page (without number) between pp. 22-23.

misery. After all, according to Mansoer, polytheism or *shirk* can make man's worldview dark and gloomy.[61]

Mansoer's work, if actually written in the 1930s, must have been among the earliest treatises on the subject of polytheism in modern Indonesia written by a Muslim thinker. His approach was unique for his time, since, as previously discussed, instead of relying on doctrinal arguments he refers more to logical reasoning. Textual arguments were kept to a minimum. Since the time of Mansoer, there have been more works written on this issue. Although none has surpassed his work, the presentation of the material is generally clearer than that of Mansoer. One of these works is *Tegakkan Tauhid, Tumbangkan Syirik* (Establish *Tawḥīd* and Demolish Polytheism), by Hasan Basry. In spite of its apparent simplicity, this work adresses the fundamental issue of *tawḥīd* and *shirk* in a comprehensive way. The discussion of *shirk* covers a definition and distinction; an analysis of some practices that may bring people to polytheism; and an argument against *shirk* as a disastrous belief that is contrary to true human nature. This work, however, mostly relies on doctrinal arguments with a lot of citations from the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīth texts.[62] Another recent work discussing the issue of polytheism is *Kembali kepada Akidah Islam* (Return to the [True] Belief of Islam) by Halimuddin. The first half of this book is devoted to discussing the eradication of erroneous beliefs. The most important targets are the use of amulets, magical spells, soliciting blessings from a tree or rock, and seeking the aid of power from other than God. This book is based on doctrinal arguments as well as a lot of citations from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. More interestingly, the author acknowledges his debt to the teaching of H.A. Malik Ahmad, a Muhammadiyah scholar, from whom he learned religious doctrines during his study at the Muʿallimīn ʿUlyā senior high school Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, in addition to

[61] Mas Mansoer, *Risalah Tauhid dan Sjirik*, p. 61.

[62] Hasan Basry, *Tegakkan Tauhid, Tumbangkan Syirik* (Solo: Ramadhani, 1991). Although the writer does not clearly indicate to which school of thought he belongs, by considering its bibliography which includes some works by reformist thinkers like that of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad ʿAbduh, in addition to that of Hamka, Sayyid Quṭb, Sayyid Sābiq, and several others, the book is closer to the modernist group. However, it must be kept in mind that recently there have been many independent writers who cannot be easily characterized as belonging to either traditionalist or modernist groups, especially due to the wider access to the main doctrinal sources.

his reading of the works of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Ibn Taymīyah.[63]

C. Persatuan Islam: the Fundamental Beliefs

Like the Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam was deeply concerned about the poor social conditions of Indonesian Muslims in the early twentieth century. In the preamble of its constitution, Persatuan Islam declared that the Muslim *ummah* would have never fallen into misery and despair had they remained true to the principal doctrines of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. The hardships that Muslims had suffered were the direct consequence of deviating from the true path of Islam. The preamble further emphasizes that in order to improve their well-being, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to avoid all false ideas through adhering to the way of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. There is a path of righteousness that threads its way from the time of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 717-720), the most pious caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, up to the age of al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, in modern times. To spread its ideas, Persatuan Islam employed the ways of "communal life" (*hidup berjamaʿah*) under the guidance and the rule of an *Imām* as exemplified by the Prophet Muḥammad.[64] Therefore, the main purpose for the establishment

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[63] Halimuddin, *Kembali kepada Akidah Islam* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1990), p. ix. Like Hasan Basry noted above, Halimuddin only mentions his indebtedness to his teacher, Malik Ahmad, as an indirect token of his inclination to the modernist group. Malik Ahmad was one of the prominent figures in the Muhammadiyah circle from West Sumatra, one of whose works on Islamic doctrine is *Akidah: Pembahasan-pembahasan Mengenai Allah dan Taqdir* (Jakarta: al-Hidayah, 1985).

[64] For the Constitution of the Persatuan Islam (*Qanun Asasi*), see Syafiq A. Mughni, *Hassan Bandung Pemikir Islam Radikal* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1994), pp. 137-157. However, the idea that the Persatuan Islam should implement "communal life" under the guidance and the rule of an *Imam* as exemplified by the Prophet was not fully accomplished, and, as Mughni himself testifies, "it remains a rhetorical nomenclature." Persatuan Islam did not formulate clearly how this ideal should be applied in real practice. (Interview with Dr. Syafiq A. Mughni at Montreal, 3 September 1999). Yet an injunction to live in a "communal life" might be traced back to a tradition attributed to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second Caliph, who said that "the best people are the *Ṣaḥābah* [or the Prophet's companions]; and those who came after them are inferior and so forth until lies will diffuse. In this case, one should have recourse to the community, since the Devil exists with the individual." The life in *jamāʿah*, accordingly, will prevent Muslims from believing in lies. This idea is also approved by another tradition attributed to the Prophet saying that "God protects the community [*jamāʿah*] and whoever leaves the community may be liable

of Persatuan Islam was to implement the teachings of Islam in all aspects of life in order to bring the community of believers back to the purity of faith and practice (*ʿaqīdah* and *sharīʿah*). Cosequently, Persatuan Islam emphasizes the necessity of abolishing all innovations, superstitions, obscurantism, blind imitation (*taqlīd*), and polytheism that were prevalent among Indonesian Muslims of the time.

The formulation of Persatuan Islam doctrine was primarily due to the efforts of A. Hassan (1887-1958), who was the chief intellectual figure of this association. With his prolific writing (he wrote no less than eighty treatises), he is widely considered the greatest pioneer in the development of Islamic literature in modern Indonesia.[65] In the field of Islamic beliefs, Hassan's works include *Kitāb al-Tauḥīd* (first appeared in 1937), *al-Īmān* (n. d.), *ʿAqā'id* (n.d.), *Adakah Tuhan?* (1962, reprinted in Malaysia 1971), *Benarkah Muhammad itu Rasul?* (1931), and *An-Nubuwwah* (1941). Unfortunately two of these works, *al-Īmān* and *ʿAqā'id*, cannot be located in libraries, and are rarely cited by writers who examine Hassan's thought. They are only known through Mughni's list of Hassan's works. In addition to the above mentioned treatises, Hassan's theological thought can be found scattered in some other works not specifically devoted to theology, such as his *Pengajaran Shalat* (1930, reprinted 1991), *Sual-Djawab* (1931, reprinted 1957-1958), and *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (1941). It is not clear enough why Hassan also discusses his theological views in these latter works. His *Pengajaran Shalat* for instance, is a manual on how to perform prayers in strict accordance with the guidance of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Yet Hassan devotes large sections to a general discussion of the pillars of Islamic beliefs, even in the beginning of

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to Devil's attack, like a sheep which may be liable to the wolf's attack when it leaves the flock. God unites the people for the purpose of their keeping the right way." *Jamāʿah*, in this sense, is the opposite of *iftirāq*, or division, which causes perdition. Therefore, adherence to the *jamāʿah* will serve as a guarantee to preserve Muslims and protect them from being led astray. See Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 5-6. Abrahamove bases his discussion of this issue on al-Lālakā'ī's *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah* (Mecca, 1981). See also our discussion in the previous chapter, n. 60.

[65] *Hassan Bandung*, ibid., p. 52. For the complete list of A. Hassan's works, see Mughni, ibid., pp. 129-131. For Hassan's biography, see Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1980); A. Minhaji, "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887-1958)" (Doctoral Thesis, McGill University, 1997), pp. 83-118. See also H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari and Syafiq A. Mughni, *A. Hassan Wajah dan Wijhah Seorang Mujtahid* (Bangil: Al-Muslimun, 1985).

the book. The reason for this is unclear, since this wider issue is not explicitly connected to the central topic of the book. This is unlike his *Sual-Djawab* which is intended to answer any question raised by his co-religionists dealing with all aspects of religious doctrines.[66] In his *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (Islam and Nationalism), theological issues are also discussed but in order to give a foundation for how people in a country should establish their relationship with one other while maintaining their obedience to the rule of God. This book is meant to show Muslims the proper role of Islam in public life.[67] According to its publisher, the book is primarily meant as a guide for Muslims in discussing the issue of whether or not it was permissible for them to uphold nationalism (*kebangsaan*) as a foundation for their (future) state.[68] Hassan's doctrinal thought has been examined by a number of

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[66] Hassan relies very much on the question-and-answer approach in discussing religious issues, as manifested in his *Sual-Djawab* and *At-Tauhied*, and some parts of other works, like *Islam dan Kebangsaan*. Hassan's preference for this approach, which resembles "s*ic-et-non*" method developed in the Middle Ages in speculative theology or *kalām*, is meant to provide a brief, easy and clear way to understanding religious solutions to daily problems. Therefore, as reported by Syafiq A. Mughni, *Sual-Djawab* was very popular among the proponents of reform movements. For them this work functioned as reference for their religious problems, equivalent to the function of *al-Masā'il* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal which contains Ibn Ḥanbal's elaboration of the problems of *fiqh*, ethics, and principal beliefs raised to him by his disciples and followers. See Syafiq A. Mughni, "Warisan A. Hassan dalam Arus Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia," in H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari and M. Amien Rais (eds.), *Pak Natsir 80 Tahun: Penghargaan dan Penghormatan Generasi Muda* (Jakarta: Media Da'wah, 1988), p. 172. However, the use of such a method in many of his works caused the works of Hassan to be less than exhaustive and repetitive. This is understandable, since in this question-and-answer Hassan had to respond every question spontaneously, even with less complete preparation. (Interview with Dr. Syafiq A. Mughni, 15 September 1999).

[67] Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1970), p. 28.

[68] Hassan maintained that Indonesia was an Islamic country, since 90 percent of its population was Muslim. Based on this allegation, he asserted that the law which should be applied in the country must be the law of Allah. He also demanded that every Islamic political movement in the country support this idea and reject all endeavors to apply the secular law maintained by the Nationalist camp who claimed to uphold neutral position toward religions. Hassan also reminded Muslims not to accept the leadership of those who refused to apply the Islamic law in Indonesia. His main desire was that Islam should be the foundation of the country, instead of nationalism. See his *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (Bangil: Al-Lisan and Persatuan Islam Bahagian Pustaka, 1941), pp. 8, 38, 41, 48-49. Federspiel wrote a special article discussing this work of Hassan in his "Islam and Nationalism (An Annotated Translation of and Commentary on *Islam dan Kebangsaan*, a Religious-Political Pamphlet Published by *Al-Lisan* in the Netherlands East Indies in 1941)." *Indonesia*, vol. 24 (October 1977), pp. 39-86.

scholars; such as, Federspiel in his study of the Persatuan Islam (1970), Noer Iskandar al-Barsany in his "Pemikiran Teologi A. Hassan: Kajian Analitis untuk Mengetahui Posisi Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan" (1997), and Syafiq A. Mughni in his "Pandangan Ahmad Hassan Mengenai Pelbagai Masalah Agama serta Reaksi Terhadapnya" (1979).

In the following discussion, I will focus in particular on Hassan's conception of the essential principles of belief. The majority of it will be devoted to the above-mentioned works, especially his *At-Tauhied*. In this work, however, Hassan was primarily concerned with belief in God, pushing aside the other pillars of belief to be discussed in other works.[69] Like any writing on the principal beliefs of Islam, Hassan's examination of the belief in God must address the problem of God's attributes. Thus he defines *'ilm al-tawḥīd* as a science that explains the attributes of God, such that every Muslim must learn and accept.[70] In the *At-Tauhied*, Hassan explains that belief in God is an essential obligation for every person. It defines the relationship between human and God. In establishing this Islamic ideal, Hassan attacks the Christian concept of Trinity, saint worship, and certain animistic practices erroneously held by some Muslims.[71] Hassan explains the nature of God as He who creates, sustains every single creature that human can see or cannot see, that human knows or does not know, in any place in the world, in the heaven, in the air, or on the surface of the earth, and in the ocean. However, human cannot know the essence of God through the senses. God can only be known through believing in Him and comprehending His attributes. God has all the attributes of divinity and perfection. Hassan affirms that God has thirteen attributes like that formulated by al-Ash'arī. Therefore, Hassan does not agree with some *'ulamā'* who maintain

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[69] For his discussion of the belief in Prophets, see his *an-Nubuwwah* (1941) and *Benarkah Muhammad itu Rasul* (1931). For the general discussion of the six pillars of belief, as noted above, see his *Pengajaran Shalat* (Bangil: Pustaka Tamaam, 1991), pp. 19-21, 120-146. Since I do not have access to *al-Īmān* and *'Aqā'id*, it is impossible to describe the contents of these works. But it is mostly possible to assume that they discussed the pillars of belief.

[70] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam Bahagian Putaka, 1958), p. 1. Compare, for instance, with some works used for this field of study in the *Pondok Pesantren*, such as *Sharḥ Tīǰān al-Darārī* (Surabaya: Mutiara Ilmu, n. d.), *Ḥāshiyat al-'Ālim al-'Allāmah Shaykh al-Islām al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bayjūrī* (Semarang: Thoha Putra, n. d.), and al-Shaykh Ṭāhir b. Ṣāliḥ, *al-J̌awāhir al-Kalāmīyah fī Īḍāḥ al-'Aqīdat al-Islāmīyah* (Surabaya: Andalas, n. d.).

[71] Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 28.

that God's attributes are twenty in number. According to Hassan, the other seven attributes (*kawnuhu qādiran, murīdan, ʿāliman, ḥayyan, samīʿan, baṣīran,* and *mutakalliman*), called *ṣifāt maʿnawīyah*, are not essential aspects of God's being. They are only tautologies based upon the ideas of *qudrah, irādah, ʿilm, ḥayāh, samʿ, baṣar,* and *kalām* already listed among the thirteen attributes.[72]

Muslims, according to Hassan, should believe in those attributes, since they are described by God Himself through His revelation. Hassan admits that some of the divine attributes also seem applicable to human, as indicated by some Qurʾānic verses conveying anthropomorphic meanings. However, the divine attributes must be different, since the attributes of human are granted by God; and human, who is by nature weak, is limited in his power. On the other hand, God is sometimes described as having some attributes similar to those belonging to human. For example, God has hands, a face, and eyes. In dealing with this issue, Hassan states that the word *yad* (hand) can be interpreted as power and gift. But it can also be understood as the hand proper, except that this hand should be uniquely God's and distinct from that belonging to human. A similar interpretation can be applied to the meaning of *ʿayn* (eye) and *wajh* (face). Federspiel has provided further explaination of this issue, as follows:

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[72] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, pp. 15-18. Maintaining that God has twenty attributes is a belief mostly held by the traditionalists, claimed to be based on al-Māturīdī's formulation. The traditionalist books on principal beliefs usually begin with an extensive discussion of these twenty attributes of God. See the above noted works commonly used in the *Pondok Pesantren* in the field of Islamic principal beliefs. It is amazing, however, that although al-Ashʿarī—who was regarded as the most important theologian to be followed by the traditionalists—does not accept the formula of these twenty attributes, the traditionalists continue to uphold this belief. Nevertheless, although Hassan only recognizes thirteen attributes of God, he still discusses the division of those twenty attributes into four: (1) *Ṣifah nafsīyah*, that is His existence or *al-wujūd*. (2) *Ṣifāt salbīyah*, consisting of His being from eternity or *qidam,* subsisting forever or *baqāʾ,* being different from things originated, or *mukhālafat li-l-ḥawādith,* being independent of substrate, or *qiyāmuhu bi-nafsih,* and His being one, or *waḥdānīyah*. (3) *Ṣifāt al-maʿānī*, consisting of His power or *qudrah,* will or *irādah,* knowledge or *ʿilm,* life or *ḥayāh*, hearing or *samaʿ*, sight or *baṣar* and speech or *kalām*. (4) *Ṣifāt maʿnawīyah*, consisting of His being mighty or *kawnuhu qādiran,* willing or *murīdan,* knowing or *ʾāliman,* living or *ḥayyan,* hearing or *samīʿan,* seeing or *basīran,* and speaking or *mutakalliman*. *Ṣifah nafsīyah* means the essential attribute of God, that is His existence. *Salbīyah* means negative, that is the attributes indicating the negation of what is inappropriate to God not to have it. *Maʿānī* means ideas, used in a special and technical sense, and *maʿnawīyah* is relative to *maʿānī*. See *At-Tauhied*, pp. 21-24. See also A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 275.

> The nature of God (i.e., His attributes, such as hearing, seeing, living), stated Ahmad Hassan, is similar to that of man; yet, at the same time, the divine and human forms are not identical, and God remains unique and distinct from His creation. The difference is one of degree since man's life is limited in comparison with the power of God that is capable of producing whatever He desires. In the same way, man is an individual, but has an equal in other men, while God's individuality cannot be paralleled. Therefore, despite the similarity of attributes, …. "our attributes are not like the attributes of Allah and Allah is not like us."[73]

To sum up, Hassan allows the use of figurative interpretations in understanding the idea of attributes, as long as they are applied in their appropriate context. Thus he interprets the words *'ayn, a'yun* (11:37, 52:48) as "caring," "supervision," "knowledge," and "consideration."[74]

Hassan also discusses the verse "God the Most Gracious is firmly

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[73] Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 31; A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 8. Another issue relating to the similarities of the attributes of God and that of man is also discussed in the *Sual-Djawab*, vol. 12, p. 83. However, in this latter work Hassan deals with a question: "(If God has some similar attributes to man) can we say that God also eats, sleeps, etc., although in His own particular manner?" Hassan explains that God is characterized with all attributes of perfection and is free from any weakness. If we say that God eats or drinks, it means He is weak, because He needs something to support His existence, and God is far removed from this weakness. These qualities are different from seeing, hearing and speaking—called the attributes of perfection—as otherwise He would be called blind, deaf, or dumb. The qualities of eating, drinking and sleeping, disregarding the ways they are undertaken, necessarily indicate need, therefore are impossible.

[74] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, pp. 30-31. For another comprehensive discussion of the issue of anthropomorphism in Islamic theology, see Binyamin Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism and Interpretation of the Qur'ān in the Theology of al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm Kītāb al-Mustarshid* (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1996). In this work, Abrahamov discusses the epistle of the Zaidite imām, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 860), the *Kītāb al-Mustarshid*, which reflects the Mu'tazilite ways in dealing with the anthropomorphic expressions of the Qur'ān. Al-Qāsim is of the opinion that these anthropomorphic expressions should be understood in their figurative, rather than in literal meanings. To support his idea, al-Qāsim uses similes, idioms and phrases in Arabic, pieces of evidence from ancient Arabic poetry, interpretation of words, and rational arguments. Al-Qāsim's refutation of *tashbīh*, or anthropomorphism, is based mainly on the Qur'ānic verses "There is none like unto Him" (112:4), and "There is nothing whatever like unto Him" (42:11), which are self-evident (*muḥkamāt*). Other verses, which attribute human organs and acts to God, are considered ambiguous (*mutashābihāt*), and are to be understood figuratively. Thus, the word "hand" in the verse "I created by My hands" (38:75), for instance, is to be understood as God's ability and knowledge. The same word in the verse "But His hands are extended" (5:64) is to be interpreted as indicating instances of God's grace. See pp. 9 and 18. However, it remains unclear whether or not Hassan's inclination to figurative interpretation of the "ambiguous verses" was due to the Mu'tazilite's influence.

established on the throne," *al-Raḥmān ʿalā al-ʿarsh istawā* (20:5). The meaning of this verse has been a source of contention throughout the history of Islamic thought. Hassan, however, adopts a literal interpretation, stating that God really sits on the throne but it is in His unquestionable, unique manner, unlike that of human. He also refers to *ʿulamā'* of the Salaf period, who maintained that we must accept the belief that Allah really sits down on the throne, because it is He Himself who tells us. The manner of His sitting, however, is unknown. Nevertheless it must be suitable to His holiness and distinct from that of His creation.[75] Although Hassan, to some extent, accepts the figurative or symbolic interpretation of some Qur'ānic words, he disagrees with the later *ʿulamā'* (*khalaf, muta'akhkhirīn*) who held that *istawā* means *istawlā*, that is "to rule" or "to govern." Hassan argues that God does not govern in the same way as human does. Hassan concludes that it would be best to interpret *istawā* as "sitting" or "being firmly established" rather than "governing."[76]

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[75] It has been noted previously that the earliest discussion on this issue might be the one traced back to Malik b. Anas, as reported by al-Shahrastānī in his *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* (Cairo: al-Ḥalabī, 1968), vol. 1, p. 93. Malik b. Anas is one of the Salaf' *ʿulamā'* and Ahl al-Ḥadīth who maintained that God possesses eternal attributes of knowledge, power, life, will, hearing, seeing and speaking. They did not distinguish between the attributes of essence (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) and the attributes of activities (*ṣifāt fiʿlīyah*). Rather they noted that these attributes were mentioned in the *Sharīʿah*, and thus should be simply described as "testified attributes" (*ṣifāt khabarīyah*). They were also unwilling to interpret those attributes. With regard to God's sitting on the throne, Malik b. Anas is reported to state: "the sitting is known, but the modality (of His sitting) is unknown, and the belief in it is obligatory, and questioning on it is a heresy" (*al-istiwā' maʿlūm, wa'l-kayfīyat majhūlah, wa'l-īmān bihi wājib, wa'l-su'āl ʿanhu bidʿah*). This idea was supported by some other jurists, including Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī, and their followers of Ahl al-Ẓāhir. See supra, p. 63.

[76] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 32. Hassan does not identify the *khalaf* or *muta'akhkhirīn* of the *ʿulamā'* implied in his work. However, interpreting *istawā* as *istawlā* can be referred to Al-Ashʿarī's *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1990), pp. 70-76, in which al-Ashʿarī mentions that those *ʿulamā'* were among the Muʿtazilite and Jahmite. More clearly, Jābir Zāyd ʿĪd al-Simīrī in his *al-Ṣifāt al-Khabarīyah bayn al-Muthbitīn wa-l-Mu'awwilīn Bayānan wa-Ta'ṣīlan* (Khartoum: al-Dār al-Sudānīyah li-l-Kutub, 1995), pp. 178-182, mentions that it was al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār of the Muʿtazilite who maintains that *al-istiwā'* means *al-istūlā'*, based on the latter's *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* and *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah*. However, interpreting *istawā* as *istawlā* is also held by Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī, another leading figure of the Sunnites, in his *Lumaʿ al-Adillah fī Qawāʿid ʿAqā'id Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah* ed. by Fawqīyah Husayn Maḥmūd (Beirut: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1987), p. 108. See also some notes and comments made by Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Khaḍīrī and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī Abū Raydah in their edition of al-Bāqillānī's *al-Tamhīd fī al-Radd ʿalā al-Mulḥidah al-Muʿaṭṭilah wa-l-Rāfiḍah wa-l-Khawārij wa-l-Muʿtazilah* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr

In general, except in the above noted matter of *istawā*, Hassan is more inclined to accept the figurative or symbolic interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses regarding the anthropomorphic attributes of God bearing similarities with that of human.[77] This is even more apparent when we consider his exposition of the following verses: "He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do" (57:4), and "We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein" (50:16). Hassan asserts that Allah is always present together with us and close to us through His caring, mercy, and supervision, but not through His essence. Another interesting example is given to explain an issue that God can forget and devise plots (*makr*), an idea that directly contradicts His attribute of perfection and being free from any deficiency. Hassan explains that in the verse revealing that God forgets "He hath forgotten them (the hypocrites)" (9:67), the notion of forgetting is related to the concept of divine mercy. Since the hypocrites neglected or ignored the will of God, in return, He neglected them and did not care about them. With regard to the idea that Allah can plot, conveyed in "And (the unbelievers) plotted and planned, and Allah too planned, and the best of planners is Allah" (3:54), Hassan explains that the verse refers to the people who plotted to murder ʿĪsā (Jesus) through special tricks and intrigue. But Allah, in return, also managed to plot against them to save Jesus from their trap. Hence, Allah is the most gifted at nullifying their intrigue.[78] After all, it cannot be said that God is forgetful, nor can He be

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al-ʿArabī, 1947), pp. 264-265; Jalāl Mūsā, *Nash'at al-Ashʿarīyah wa-Taṭawwuruhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1982), pp. 330-331.

[77] Noer Iskandar Al-Barsany, who examines Hassan's theological thought, has a special discussion of the way followed by Hassan in interpreting the Qur'ān. According to his findings, Hassan relies more on literal interpretation of the text, and considers reason as only a useful means to understanding revelation (and not to decide truth). Al-Barsany supports his judgement by citing Hassan's statement that for those who want a non-literal interpretation of the Qur'ān should read some Qur'anic *tafsīrs* other than Hassan's *al-Furqān*, his Indonesian translation of the Qur'ān. Based on this approach, Al-Barsany concludes that Hassan can be categorized as a traditionalist, regardless of his radical thought, his tendency to puritanism and his special talent in using the science of logic in defending Islam. See his "Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan: Kajian Analitis untuk Mengetahui Posisi Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan" (Doctoral Dissertation, IAIN Yogyakarta, 1997), pp. 205-206.

[78] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, pp. 32-33. While ʿAbdullah Yusuf Ali (*The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*) uses the words "plotted" and "planned" to translate the word *kayd*, Hassan more boldly uses the word *menipu* which is more appropriate to be understood as "deceiving" and "cheating."

described as a schemer by nature. The intention was to frustrate a scheme to murder Jesus. He wanted to save His messenger from treachery.

Hassan then deals with the question regarding the number of divine attributes. He answers this question by reiterating his point that Allah possesses all the attributes of perfection and is free from any deficiency. Hassan explains that there are thirteen or twenty known divine attributes. Others, such as the capacity to create, give sustenance, make life and death, elevate somebody's degree or debase it, are all aspects of His *qudrah*, or power. The other attributes, like mercy, forgiving, patience, and benevolence, are called testified attributes, or *ṣifāt khabarīyah*, which, according to Hassan, are not essential attributes; in the sense that their disappearance will not shorten or weaken God's divinity.[79] God's attributes referring to His ninety-nine most beautiful names, called the *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*, are not fully addressed by Hassan. Among those ninety-nine, he notes only twelve, which he puts into either the domain of *qudrah* or *ṣifāt khabarīyah*. Yet he does explain that the other attributes can be regared as descriptions of His quality as *mukhālafat li'l-ḥawādith*, that is His being distinct from His creation.[80] He does not, however, give any further explanation of this.

As has been stated above, *'ilm al-tawḥīd*, according to Hassan, is the science of the attributes of God, which every Muslim should know and believe.[81] Therefore, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to learn these attributes in order to indicate his belief. However, Hassan distinguishes how this belief is achieved both in general (*ijmālī*, *mujmal*) and particular (*tafṣīlī*) ways. To believe in its general way

[79] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 34.

[80] Ibid. There have been several works devoted to discussing *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*, such as al-Ghazālī's *The Ninety-nine Beautiful Names of God: al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, translated with notes by David Burrel and Nazih Daher (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992); Daniel Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam: exegese lexicographique et theologique* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); and Shaikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, *The Most Beautiful Names* (Putney, Vermont: Threshold Books, 1985).

[81] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 1. Compare this, for instance, with the definition made by Muḥammad 'Abduh in his *Risālat al-Tawhīd*, in which he states "The theology of unity (*Tauhīd*) is the science that studies the being and attributes of God, the essential and the possible affirmations about Him, as well as the negations that that are necessary to make relating to Him. It deals also with the apostles and the authenticity of their message and treats of their essential and appropriate qualities and of what is incompatibly associated with them." Muḥammad 'Abduh, *The Theology of Unity*, translated by Isḥāq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 29.

means to maintain that God has no equivalent and that He possesses all attributes of divinity and perfection, as well as that He is free from any deficiency, weakness, and other base qualities. On the other hand, to believe in a particular way means to maintain that God has those thirteen or twenty attributes, as has been discussed above.[82] Since the knowledge of God's attributes is necessary for every Muslim, Hassan discusses the advantages of learning these divine attributes. He admits, however, that although it is essential to learn these attributes, it is not always necessary to memorize them.[83] One of the great advantages that Muslims can obtain from learning these divine attributes is a better understanding of the fact that God, whom they have to worship, is correctly characterized with those qualities. If a Muslim is convinced that God is one, the most seeing, the most hearing, and the most powerful, he will submit himself with confidence to Him alone. He will not be afraid of anything except of transgressing divine interdictions. He will also never rely on any medium in order to come closer to Him except through the recognized ways; that is, by performing all His ordainments and respecting His prohibitions.[84]

A knowledge of God's attributes is necessary for Muslims to strengthen their belief and to establish a direct relationship with God. By emphasizing this idea, Hassan means to deter the use of *tawassul* (medium) in the solicitation of divine favor.[85] The use of *tawassul* has long been another common characteristic of the traditionalist Muslims in the country. In practice, as reported by Hassan, those who maintain this tradition pray to God by means of soliciting the spirits of the Prophet, the saints, and the pious.[86] Hassan gives the

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[82] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, pp. 3-4.

[83] The memorization of the twenty attributes of God is a particular characteristic of the Traditionalists. The pupils in *pesantrens* are usually requested to memorize them for their lesson in doctrinal belief. These twenty attributes are also commonly recited as a litany prior to performing congregational prayers in mosques of the Traditionalist Muslims. For litany recitation prior to congregational prayers, see supra, note 116 of the preceding chapter.

[84] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, pp. 35-36.

[85] For a discussion of *tawassul* from the Islamic perspective, see Ibn Taymīyah, *Qā'idah Jalīlah fī al-Tawassul wa'l-Wasīlah*, edited by al-Sayyed Jamīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1985. Another work on *tawassul* by Ibn Taymīyah, *Al-Tawassul wa-l-Wasīlah* (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Iftā', 1984), has been translated into Indonesian, entitled *Tawassul dan Wasilah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1987).

[86] As far as I observed, the practice of *tawassul* can also be noticed during the *slametan*, in which *tahlilan* is performed as its main ritual. The ritual prayer usually

following example: "Oh my Lord, please fulfil my requests through the blessing or intercession of so and so…." Hassan further reports that those who believe in the merits of *tawassul* base their arguments on some Ḥadīths revealing that Adam used *tawassul* to ask God's forgiveness for his sins by means of Muḥammad's blessing. Another Ḥadīth is said to explain that the Prophet taught a blind person to establish *tawassul* by calling out to him. Soon afterward, the blind man was reported to be able to see. Hassan cites another Ḥadith commonly used to justify *tawassul*. One of the Prophet's companions was reported to have asked him to fulfil his request to God. But in this instance, the companion requested aid during the Prophet's lifetime. After his death the companion sought *tawassul* through the Prophet's uncle, ʿAbbās.[87] According to Hassan, all these Ḥadiths, except the last, are weak, and cannot be used as a proof to justify *tawassul*. It is true that the Qur'ān allows Muslims to use *wasīlah*

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begins with a solemn recitation of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, the first chapter of the Qur'ān, the reward of which is claimed to be presented (*dihadiahkan*) to the spirits of the Prophet, of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jaylānī, of the local saints, of the venerated figures in the village, and of the ancestors of the family. To commence this ritual ceremony, the leader of *tahlilan* addresses the audiences by stating "*ilā ḥaḍrat al-nabī al-muṣṭafā sayyidinā wa-mawlānā Muḥammad al-Fātiḥah…, wa-ilā rūh shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jaylānī, al-Fātiḥah…*," followed by every participant by reciting the *sūrah*. By presenting the reward of the *al-Fātiḥah* recitation to those spirits, the prayers are believed to be more acceptable to God. However, it remains debatable whether or not the reward of the *al-Fātiḥah* recitation will reach the addressee, i.e., the spirits of the deceased. Hassan boldly denies such a belief, stating that even Imām al-Shāfiʿī himself asserted that the reward of the *al-Fātiḥah* recitation, as well as the *tahlilan* proper, will not reach the deceased. See *Sual-Djawab* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam Bahagian Pustaka, 1958), vol. 1, p. 29. For an example of the text of *tahlilan* prayers, see Idrus H.A., *Kitab Asrar Walisanga* (Pekalongan: Bahagia, 1995), pp. 35-39; Ahmad and Munawar Elhasany, *Perguruan al-Hikamh Agung* (Pekalongan: Bahagia, 1987), pp. 167-168.

[87] Hassan does not mention the name of the Companion concerned. It is Ibn Taymīyah who provides us with a further explanation of the issue. According to his examination, that companion was 'Umar b. Khaṭṭāb, who was reported to say: "Oh my God, when we suffered drought we implored you by means (*wasīlah*) of our Prophet, and You poured upon us rain; and now we implore you (again) through the means of our Prophet's uncle, so please pour upon us rain." The *tawassul* in this sense, according to Ibn Taymīyah, is the prayers (*duʿā'*) implored to God by the Prophet and his uncle, and not by means of the Prophet's spirit or his grave, and thus it is only valid during his lifetime. Based on this idea, Ibn Taymīyah then distinguishes three meanings of *tawassul*: *Tawassul* through obeying God's prophet which is obligatory and without which *īmān* is incomplete. (2) *Tawassul* through the Prophet's prayer which was valid during his life only and through his intercession later in the Day of Judgement. (3) *Tawassul* by means of the Prophet's spirit which was not undertaken by his companions, either upon his grave or the graves of others. See Ibn Taymīyah, *Qā'idah Jalīlah*, p. 71.

(another derivative of *tawassul*), as stated in 5:35, "Seek the means of approach [*wasīlah*] unto Him." But, according to Ibn Taymīyah, "the means of approach" mentioned in this verse signifies obedience to God and His messenger. *Tawassul* of this type is the foundation of religion, and is unanimously approved by Muslims.[88] Although the last Ḥadith mentioned by Hassan indicates that *tawassul* is permitted, it also testifies that the *tawassul* of the Prophet was valid only during his lifetime, and not after his death. This is consistent with the companion who turned to the Prophet's uncle for succour. Hassan deduces that if the *tawassul* of the dead were permissible, the companions would not have turned to ʿAbbās for spiritual aid. Hassan emphasizes again that both the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth do not demand Muslims to seek *tawassul* from the dead. This practice will lessen their faith in the absolute unity of God. Therefore, according to Hassan, Muslims should direct their prayers to God alone. However, he maintains that "there is no objection to asking our parents and other pious persons who are still living to pray for our well-being."[89]

Hassan fears that the use of *tawassul* in worshipping God may lead the worshippers to *shirk*, or polytheism, especially when it is directed toward the spirits of the dead. Such practices were the way of the pagan Arabs before Islam, in which idols were used as intermediary objects in prayer. This way of worshipping God is recorded in the Qurʾān, "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah." (39:3). The idols which the ancient Arabs erected in the holy shrine at Mecca were believed to be the personifications of the saints.[90] In explaining this erroneous manner of worship, Hassan implicitly compares what happened to the pagan Arabs with what had happened to the people of Noah. As noted in our discussion of

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[88] Ibn Taymīyah, ibid.

[89] Hassan, *At-Tauhied,* pp. 58-59. Howerver, there is another work disclaiming this idea written by Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Subḥānī, *al-Wahhābīyah fī-l-Mīzān* which has been translated into Indonesian: *Tawassul Tabarruk Ziarah Kubur Karamah Wali Termasuk Ajaran Islam: Kritik atas Faham Wahabi*, translated by Zahir and Ahmad Najib (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1995). As can be understood from its Indonesian version, it is clear that the book is meant to defend the validity of practices of *tawassul* and soliciting the graves of the saints. "Although such practices are frequently blamed as being *bidʿah* or even *shirk*," says the comment on the back cover of the book, "the critics could not stop Muslims from undertaking them. Restraining Muslims from such practices will only result in emotionally barren religious experience."

[90] Ibid., p. 59.

Mas Mansoer's idea of *shirk*, worshipping the spirits of the dead had been practiced before Noah was summoned by God. At the time of Noah, people believed that the spirits of late pious leaders remained effective transmitters of requests to God, and thus they continued to venerate their graves. In this regard, Ibn Taymīyah quotes a saying attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās that the era between Adam and Noah lasted ten centuries; all people living during this period were Muslims, and then polytheism began to appear due to an exaggerated veneration of pious leaders.[91]

In Hassan's subsequent discussion of *shirk*, the issue of *tawassul* is reiterated in a number of different ways. After defining *shirk* as "associating Allah with something as an object of worship and veneration, and believing that it has a power to fulfil human's requests and hopes,"[92] Hassan then gives some examples of the beliefs and practices that can be categorized as polytheism. He mentions twenty-three examples, some of which are closely related to the idea of *tawassul*. For instance, imagining (the presence of) a teacher or *shaykh* while performing *dhikr* (invocation of God); assuming that graves, rocks, or trees bear some blessing; being obeisant to graves, extraordinary rocks or trees; and soliciting the Prophet or the Sufi saints. Expressions like "Oh, the Prophet of Allah… Oh, *shaykh* ʿAbd al-Qādir… help us in overcoming our calamity," are also considered *shirk*. However, in spite of the fact that Hassan's definition of *shirk* appears very simple, it has broad implications as reflected in few other examples below. For Hassan, accepting religious statements or decisions made by teachers or *ʿulamā'* which are not approved by the Qurʾān and the Sunnah is *shirk*. Likewise, considering something to be unlawful (*ḥarām*) while Allah and His messenger did not say so is *shirk*. Believing that there will be another prophet after Muḥammad who will bring a new divine law is also regarded as *shirk*. Unfortunately, Hassan does not clarify this argument further.[93] Nevertheless, with these

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[91] Ibn Taymīyah, *Qā'idah Jalīlah fī al-Tawassul*, p. 38.

[92] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 46. For further discussion on the meaning of *shirk*, see Yaḥyā Shāmī, *al-Shirk al-Jāhilī wa-Ālihat al-ʿArab al-Maʿbūdah Qabl al-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1986), especially pp. 26-30. Shāmī's work gives a comprehensive examination of *shirk* in Arab tradition before Islam. See also Toufic Fahd, *Le panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'hégire* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1968).

[93] Compare, for instance, with the work of Muhammad Ibrahim Surty, *The Qur'an and al-Shirk (Polytheism)* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1990), especially his discussion of causes of *al-Shirk* (chapter 3). Surty examines some causes of polytheism based on

examples Hassan means to indicate that such people maintaining these ideas might believe that there is an agent other than God who has the authority to make religious judgements regarding the lawful or unlawful, and thus it must be condemned as *shirk*. It is God alone who has the authority to decide the religiously valid or invalid, and the lawful or unlawful. Nobody may share His authority in this matter. Through these examples, Hassan may refer to the tradition held by some Muslims who give too high esteem to certain *'ulamā'*, whose words are to be followed uncritically. They sufficiently base their religious knowledge and practice merely on the sayings of these *'ulamā'* without further examination through direct reference to the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, a tendency described by a contemporary scholar as one which leads to "spiritual slavery" and "religious feudalism."[94]

Another important issue discussed in Hassan's *At-Tauhied* is the problem of whether or not Muslims should be afraid of other creatures. A true Muslim, in Hassan's point of view, should only be afraid of Allah. Faith necessarily creates a profound fear of transgressing His prohibitions or violating His commands, since such actions incur God's wrath. There is nothing else to worry about except winning God's favor. This discussion is a direct response to a question raised to Hassan: "The experts in *tawḥīd* are reported to say that people who are afraid of something other than God is a polytheist (*mushrik*). What about if we feel afraid of an evil man (*zālim*) who attacks us and robs our property, or of a wild beast that threatens our life, is it *shirk* too?" Hassan asserts that feeling afraid of an evil man or a wild beast as such is definitely not *shirk*. On the contrary, human should make every effort to resist evil people, and also to protect his life from wild beasts. "It is not allowed for us," adds Hassan, "to continuously run away from the evil man and the wild beast, or to attack them with bare, unarmed hands." The fear that leads a person into *shirk* is related to matters of the spirit, such as a fear of

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the Qur'ānic perspective, such as self pride on account of absolute and unrestricted power; maintaining ancestral pride; regarding the righteous persons as gods; being deceived by one's own wealth; the obedience to human desire and love of other created beings more than the love of Allah; and denial of the Fate, Revelations, Messengers and the Day of Judgement. See ibid., pp. 47-60. See also Halimuddin, *Kembali Kepada Akidah Islam*, pp. 10-21.

[94] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Membumikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995), p. 85.

being cursed, of falling into misfortune or bad calamity because one does not properly respect the power of the saints.[95]

In the same vein, Hassan discusses the issue of asking the help of other creatures. Hassan asserts that there is no problem for anybody to ask help from other people in a regular and outwardly visible manner. It only becomes *shirk* once it leaves the realm of normal human capacity, such as a request addressed by somebody to a *dukun*, a Sufi saint or a grave in order to have a child, to become rich, to find a job, or to be promoted to a higher rank. Some people, being deeply frustrated because their desires have not been fulfilled in normal and regular manners, turn to those who are believed to hold supernatural insight and have the capacity to help others in mysterious ways. Such belief is deeply rooted in Indonesian culture, and easily becomes dominant in times of political and economic turmoil (as has happened lately in Indonesia).[96] However, it is still permissible for someone to ask somebody else simply to pray for success. Hassan bases his argument, as has been discussed before, on the fact that the Prophet's companions came to him and asked him to pray to God for them. But it was done only during the Prophet's lifetime, and after his death, Hassan emphasizes, his companions did not make any supplication to his spirit.[97]

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[95] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 48. What Hassan means by the afore-mentioned example may refer to the fact that there were some persons among the common people who claimed to hold mystical insight through which they claimed to be able to foresee what would take place in the future and what would be the fate of a man. Those persons, sometimes also identified as *dukuns* or Sufi saints, demanded the common people pay respects to their "prophetic expertise." Thus they claimed to possess a special authority over the common people, and if anybody behaved improperly to them or disobeyed their words they would experience bad fortune. Saints, therefore, were then venerated by their followers, and became highly dignified among the common people.

[96] See, supra, note 58. In spite of the fact that Islamic religious education has been developed more vigorously during the last three decades, the publication of books on talisman and magical power also flourishes lately. Some of which are written with the pretext of mixing Islamic doctrines with such beliefs. Mostly written in booklets, they can be easily found in bus stations, public buses, or town's sidewalks, sold by peddlers together with other low-priced books on cookery, Islamic popular prayers and traditional medicament. See, for example, Kurdi Ismail Haji Z.A., *Pusaka Ilmu Hikmah* (Peka-longan: Bahagia, 1988); H.M. Qori, *Mujarrobat Ampuh* (Surabaya: Indah, 1991); Idrus H.A. *Risalah Kubro Mujarrobat Walisongo: Kemuliaan, Kehebatan serta Kesektian Ilmu Amalan Auliya* (Solo: Aneka, 1994); and idem, *Kitab Asrar Walisanga* (Pekalongan: Bahagia, 1995).

[97] Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, p. 50. Hassan's discussion of this issue can also be read in the *Sual-Djawab* vol. 1, pp. 20-22, under the title "Berdo'a Kepada Selain Allah"

Finally, in discussing this principle it is important to reconsider who is the true believer from Hassan's point of view. Although Hassan does not devote a separate chapter to this issue, and merely puts it in the introductory part of his discussion of overdue prayer (*mengqadla sembahyang*, Ar. *qaḍā' al-ṣalāh*), his statement regarding this matter is clear enough. He begins with a question: "How could a non-believer become a believer?," which is simply answered, "if he (the non-believer) believes in God, in His Angels, in His holy books, in His messengers, in the Day of Judgement, and in God's decree, either good or bad." But since belief is established in the heart, and it is impossible for us to know what is in the heart, it is only God who can really know the quality of man's faith. The most we can say is that if somebody publically declares his confession of faith (*shahādah*), he must be a Muslim. The Prophet Muḥammad himself, according to Hassan, accepted conversion to Islam on the basis of pronouncing the confession of faith alone. Hassan admits that there are four other obligations to be fulfilled by Muslims. It is equally important that every person who has declared the confession of faith should perform them. Nevertheless, not performing all of the other four obligations does not necessarily indicate that a person is not a Muslim. Hassan explains further that we cannot say, for instance, that a Muslim who does not undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca is not a Muslim. Likewise, if a Muslim neglects his obligation to pray, it cannot be said that he is no longer a Muslim, although he has committed a sin. Accordingly, Hassan asserts that compared to the other four pillars of Islam the *shahādah* holds special significance in judging the believer from the unbeliever.[98]

It seems plausible to say that Hassan is more inclined to uphold the minimalist position of identifying a person as a Muslim. As has been discussed previously, W. Montgomery Watt characterizes this tendency as a kind of "moral laxity." In order to be a Muslim, with all of its benefits as a member of the universal Muslim community, one is simply required to pronounce the Islamic confession of faith (*shahādah*). This may be justified with another statement of Hassan

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(Making Supplication Prayers to Other than God). Based on some quotations from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, he emphasizes that asking help from the spirits of the dead is forbidden as is not justified by the Prophet. See also "Tachaijul, 'Azimat, Keramat" in *Sual-Djawab*, vol. 4, pp. 24-28.

[98] Hassan, "Dari Hal Meng-qadla Sembahjang," in *Sual-Djawab*, vol. 2, p. 43; Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 44.

in the *Sual-Djawab*, as paraphrased by Federspiel:

> As for the believer who holds mistaken ideas on religious questions—even if the question is one of belief—he may not be considered as *kāfir*. As proof of this stand, Ahmad Hassan stated that seventy-three persons [groups?] were mentioned in *ḥadīths* as committing errors in religious matters, and that the Prophet—although reprimanding them for their mistakes—regarded them still as members of his community (*ummah*) and not as *kāfirs*.[99]

However, be as it may, it remains unclear whether or not Hassan intentionally concurs with the idea of "moral laxity" as described by Watt. Considering that to a certain degree Hassan is an advocate of the strict application of all religious doctrines with a marked insistence on the purity of belief and doctrine, he is most likely in support of "moral anxiety." Although he maintains that pronouncing the *shahādah* alone is sufficient for salvation, this should not become an excuse to ignore works, an idea, according to Wensinck, upheld by orthodox Muslims.[100] Hamka, a leading figure in the Muhammadiyah, seems to agree with this last position. He emphasizes that Muslims may not avoid their religious obligations by merely pronouncing the *shahādah* and then believing that Paradise will be effortlessly granted.[101]

Nevertheless, with the above citation too, Hassan has presented an alternative perspective to our understanding of this time. He does so by quoting again the Ḥadīth dealing with the split of the Muslim community into seventy-three groups. It is true that the only saved group among Muslims are those who strictly follow the traditions of the Prophet and his Companions, identified as the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. Those who do not tread on this path will be accused of having broken away from mainstream Islam, and will go to Hell. But Hassan does not perceive the Ḥadīth regarding the seventy-three groups in a dogmatic manner. He is more concerned with its inference that the other seventy-two groups, in spite of being outside the mainstream Islam, remain within the bounds of Islam and are accepted as members of the Muslim community. The tolerant measure expressed by Hassan may be genuine and indicate his broad

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[99] Federspiel, ibid., p. 45; Hassan, *Sual-Djawab*, vol. 3, p. 31.

[100] A.J. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, p. 49.

[101] H. Abd al-Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka) in his *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1956), pp. 290 ff.

religious worldview. Tolerance is born out of a desire for solidarity which reflects the worldview held by the association Hassan represented, Persatuan Islam, or the "Union of Islam." This association sought to bring Muslims together into a single social union.[102]

In practice, however, it is quite different. The most outstanding attitude of Persatuan Islam, as reported by Federspiel, was of non-compromise that marked the statements of its leaders to the extent that hindered the establishment of Islamic union which the association claimed to have been promoting. The uncompromise stance is also made known in Persatuan Islam's writings which offered no quarter to its opponents, but demanded their complete submission to its ideas, both by Muslims and non-Muslims. The demand for submission encompassed all matters on which Persatuan Islam chose to assert its judgement, whether in terms of rituals, social behavior or political outlooks.[103] With reference to Deliar Noer, Federspiel points out that Persatuan Islam "seemed to create antagonism, if not enemies, everywhere; first among the traditionalists, … and [later] even within the Muslim reform group…. Hassan was very hard in his judgments, and his writing style upset his opponents, although he remained in general objective and avoided personal criticisms."[104]

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[102] Hassan was once accused by his opponents of having caused a split among Muslims. But, in defense of his position, he claimed that indeed he meant to unify Muslims on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, free from any element of *bidʿah* and *khurafāt*. "We cannot reproach those people," said Hassan, as restated by Mughni, "who maintain unity by abolishing *bidʿah*. If, for the reason of maintaining Muslim's unity, one attempts to hamper others who tried to eradicate *bidʿah*, that attempt will be meaningless, since between the two groups—the proponents of *bidʿah* and the anti-*bidʿah*—cannot be unified, even until the Day of Judgement." Syafiq A. Mughni, *Hassan Bandung*, p. 61, quoting *Pembela Islam*, vol. 41 (January 1932), p. 38. M. Dawam Rahardjo indentified Hassan as the upholder of rational-puritan ideas by his insistence on the necessity of *ijtihād*, direct reference to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and free from affiliation with any sectarian group, even with the Muhammadiyah or NU. With the last point, Hassan meant to repudiate the impression that Indonesian Islam has been virtually divided into two opposing groups or new *madhhabs*: the Muhammadiyah and NU. Therefore he summoned people to return to the only one Islam, and thus he named his association as Persatuan Islam or Union of Islam. See M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Intelektual Inteligensia dan Perilaku Politik Bangsa: Risalah Cendekiawan Muslim* (Bandung: Mizan, 1983), p. 33.

[103] Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, p. 192. For another account on Hassan's personality, see A. Minhaji, "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform," pp. 93-98.

[104] *Persatuan Islam*, ibid. For this quotation, Federspiel refers to Deliar Noer, "[The Rise and Development of] the Modernist Muslim Movement," p. 194. The same quotation can be seen in Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia*, p. 94. However, in recent time, this uncompromising position has changed considerably. In my field research at Bangil, East Jave, Ustādh Hud Musa, the current director (*mudīr*)

Yet, for his admirers, Hassan's keen criticism of his opponents was intended to achieve "the common good of the entire community." His polemics were fueled by an honesty and sincerity to carry out the truth of which he was firmly convinced. Despite the vitriolic nature of his criticism, Hassan remained very humble and friendly in his social life and personal affairs.[105]

D. The Belief in al-Qaḍā' and al-Qadar: a New Development

The above discussion of the principal beliefs formulated by both the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam provides us with a clear illustration of reformist theology constructed in the formative era. In general, it emphasized the true meaning of *tawḥīd* and therefore directed much of its attention toward the eradication of polytheism. This tendency is reflected in Mas Mansoer and A. Hassan's examinations of *shirk* and *tawassul*. However, the principal beliefs held by both organizations are actually not significantly different from those maintained by the traditionalists. Some studies have recently indicated that Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam theology is very much in the tradition of Ashʿarite scholarship. According to these studies, reformist theology essentially revivified tradition. Arbiyah Lubis, for instance, in her comparative study of the Muhammadiyah and ʿAbduh's doctrinal positions, concludes that (the early) Muhammadiyah theology is more inclined to predestinarianism (*jabarīyah*),

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of the Pesantren Putra Persatuan Islam, told me that this institution has adopted a more flexible approach in dealing with different ideas upheld by other Muslim groups. Instead of maintaining that antagonistic stance, now Persatuan Islam applies a strategy of "*fiqh al-daʿwah*," in the sense that it is more concerned with the idea of how to spread Isamic teachings in a more effective and acceptable way. In addition, Hassan's works are not used as textbooks anymore today, to be replaced by other works of contemporary scholars. In doctrinal matters, for instance, Persatuan Islam allows its students to read textbooks used in the public *madrasah* administered by the Department of Religious Affairs, though it provides its own particular textbook, *al-Tawhīd*, an adaptation of the *Kītāb al-Tawhīd* of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. (Interview with Ustādh Hud Musa, at Bangil, 25 February 1999). Persatuan Islam has been also more open to other groups of people, since it allows its alumni to join other Islamic associations, such as the Muhammadiyah, or to associate themselves with any political grouping, including the GOLKAR. (Personal communication with Dr. Syafiq A. Mughni—himself an alumnus of Persatuan Islam and once active as a provincial Member of Parliament, representative of GOLKAR—through email, 14 and 19 August 2000).

[105] Syafiq A. Mughni, "Warisan A. Hassan," p. 171.

employing the Salaf approach and sticking to issues developed by the Ashʿarites.[106] On the other hand, al-Barsany in his study of Hassan's theological thought also notes that Hassan was very much influenced by the school of Salaf, especially the Wahhābī, and that the issues he developed in his doctrinal formula are also based on the Salaf teachings.[107] In addition, Hassan's greater reliance on textual arguments than on intellectual inference indicates a strong traditionalist inclination.[108]

It must be kept in mind, however, that this interpretation is based only on the early development of the Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam. Both the *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the Muhammadiyah's *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* and Hassan's *At-Tauhied* were written in 1929 and 1937, respectively. In due course, it is hard to imagine that at that time the idea of rational theology exemplified by ʿAbduh's reinterpretation of the Muʿtazilah would be easily acceptable to orthodox Indonesian Muslim thought.[109] One may not appropriately blame Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, for his lack of acquaintance with ʿAbduh's theological concepts. Although Dahlan was reported to

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[106] Arbiyah Lubis, *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dan Muhammad Abduh: Suatu Studi Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1993), p. 183.

[107] Noer Iskandar Al-Barsany, "Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan," p. 181.

[108] Ibid., p. 206.

[109] The first person to introduce Muʿtazilism to Indonesian readers in a more comprehensive and systematic way was Harun Nasution (1919-1998). He wrote a Ph.D. thesis on ʿAbduh's theological concept with the conclusion that ʿAbduh's theology was in line with Muʿtazilism. In the early 1970s, when Harun Nasution was asked why he did not translate (into Indonesian) and publish his Ph. D. dissertation that he wrote at McGill University (1968), he replied that the conclusion he reached concerning Muḥammad ʿAbduh's theological thought would not be acceptable to Indonesian Muslims. When he was further asked about the reason, he stated: "Let's consider the point of view that might be held by these *ʿulamā*' and Muslim leaders who are present here." One of those present curiously urged him to reveal his finding asking: "So what is your conclusion?" Nasution replied: "Indeed ʿAbduh upheld a theological concept that is in line with that of the Muʿtazilites." A voice was then heard among the *ʿulamā*': "*Naʿūdh bi-l-Lāh min dhālik*" (We seek refuge to Allah from that [matter]), signifying his indignation at the idea of Muʿtazilism. Nasution, therefore, had to wait for about fifteen years until conditions were suitable enough for him to publish the second part of his dissertation which discusses ʿAbduh's theological point of views. See Harun Nasution's preface to his *Muhammad Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Muʿtazilah* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1987), pp. v-vi. The first part was published earlier (1972) as an historical analysis of some Islamic theological schools. This first part was meant to give a foundation for Nasution to elaborate ʿAbduh's theological concepts. According to Nasution, ʿAbduh gave higher position to reason than the Muʿtazilites did. Therefore he believes him to be more radical than the Muʿtazilite theologians. Yet, in this issue, silence is needed to be maintained so as not to shock Indonesian Muslims. Ibid., p. 92.

have read some works of ʿAbduh, his interest was focused more on religious activism rather than on theology.[110] Indeed it is impossible to expect that the Muhammadiyah or Hassan would advocate a rational theology similar to ʿAbduh or the Muʿtazilites, since at that time, especially in Java, the accepted theological doctrines were restricted to either the Ashʿarite or Maturidite schools. Muʿtazilism was considered heretical, and thus completely unacceptable for Sunnites. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the *Kītāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* is almost entirely based on Ashʿarite doctrines. Moreover, as has been noted before, the Muhammadiyah claims to be the proponent of Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah. This explanation can be equally applicable to our understanding of Persatuan Islam, which also claims to be the follower of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, although this allegation is less clearly stated in the works of its supporters.[111]

It also seems inappropriate to assume that the later scholars of the Muhammadiyah, like Hamka and H.A. Malik Ahmad, deviated from the theological doctrines outlined in the *Kītāb al-Īmān*.[112] It goes without saying that they upheld different theological positions, especially in their discussion of human freedom and the absolute power of God. Probably, it is wiser to consider their attempts to find a different perspective as a part of the new development occuring not only in the Muhammadiyah circle but also across all forms of Indonesian intellectual life. Likewise, it is necessary to examine the development of Muhammadiyah thought by later scholars in terms of the general intellectual environment. Of particular interest are

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[110] See K.R.H. Hadjid, *Falsafah Ajaran K.H. Ahmad Dahlan* (Yogyakarta: Siaran, n.d.). In his preface to the work, Hadjid listed some books of ʿAbduh read by Dahlan, including *Kītāb [Risālat] al-Tawhīd*, *Tafsīr Juz' ʿAmma* and *Kītāb al-Islām wa'l-Naṣrānīyah [maʿa al-ʿIlm wa'l-Madanīyah]*. In this work, Hadjid, as one of the direct disciples of Dahlan, tried to summarize the entire teachings of his mentor. Nevertheless, none of these teachings reflects an explicit influence of ʿAbduh's theological thought. Hadjid's exposition emphasizes that Dahlan was more concerned with an attempt to improve the quality of Muslims' religious commitment rather than with theological speculation.

[111] See our discussion in the previous chapter, p. 90, note 121. Mughni mentions that Persatuan Islam's chapter in Jakarta published a journal named *Suara Ahlussunnah wal Jamaʿah* in 1956, which indicates the organization's strict attachment to this school. See his *Hassan Bandung*, p. 80.

[112] Arbiyah Lubis, in her work cited above, testifies that not all of later Muhammadiyah scholars agree with the doctrinal beliefs formulated in the *Kītāb al-Īmān*. Those scholars, like Hamka and H.A. Malik Ahmad, tended to adopt Muḥammad ʿAbduh's thought, especially dealing with the idea of God's limited power and human's freedom of will. See her *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah*, p. 183.

two works by Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (1956) and *Tafsir al-Azhar* (thirty volumes, 1982-1988). In these works, Hamka began to explore the issues of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* from a different approach than that maintained by earlier scholars, with a spirit which is more congruent with an ideal to stimulate Muslims' cultural and social progress. Therefore it is interesting to examine how Hamka discusses this issue, in order to compare it with the discussion of the *Kitāb al-Īmān* and the one by Hassan. Since Hamka's theological thought contained in his *Tafsir* has already been comprehensively studied by M. Yunan Yusuf in his *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar* (1990), I will rely more heavily on this latter work in my examination of Hamka's reformulation of the belief of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar*.

In the *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* as the sixth pillar of belief expresses the idea that all Muslims should believe that God created every single thing in the universe. He puts forth commands and prohibitions, as God's decree is absolute determination (*qadaran maqdūrā*). Allah determines (the measure of) everything before creation, and governs all with His knowledge, choice, wisdom and will. Human actions are predetermined by God, and he can do nothing but to exercise his endeavor (*ikhtiyār*).[113] The exposition of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* indicates clearly that in the Muhammadiyah's point of view, God has absolute power over all creation, and even human actions are predetermined by His knowledge. Nevertheless, the individual is allowed to exercise his endeavor, which implies that there is some room for humans to exercise their freedom, but to what extent is not clearly defined.

Something almost similar to the above interpretation of the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* is offered by Hassan in his *Pengajaran Shalat*. In this work, Hassan defines the belief in *qaḍā'* and *qadar* to the extent that the fate of every created being has been determined for either good or bad, and one cannot escape from it.[114] Another part of the book also discusses the point that *qadar* means "measurement" or "decree," in the sense that Muslims have to believe that bad and good things or even death and life will not happen except by the decree of God. However, Hassan asserts that there are two different

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[113] *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, p. 19. For translating *ikhtiyār* as "endeavor" see supra, note 30.

[114] A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat* (Bangil: Tamaam, 1991), p. 21.

groups of verses which seem to contradict each other. On the one hand, there are some verses (4:78, 57:22, 9:51) which indicate that all good or bad things that happen to human are determined by God, that God has predetermined everything that will happen to him, and that nothing will happen to human except by the decree of God. All of these ideas signify that God has absolute power and leave little room for humans to exercise their freedom. But on the other hand, there are other verses indicating that the evil things which happen to humans are caused by their own actions, and that those who do good deeds will find their rewards, and those who do bad deeds will find punishment (42:34, 4:79). Accordingly, humans have a degree of free action, independent of God's decree. Hassan, however, does not perceive those two different groups of verses as contradictory. The paradox is resolved by the concept of *ikhtiyār* (endeavor). Although the first group of verses testifies that God determines everything that happens to human, they do not clearly denote that human has no chance to make his own decisions. If human did not have the chance to make his own decisions, Hassan argues, he would not be punished for his transgression of God's prohibitions. It is true that through *qadar* God has determined either good or bad things, but humans are endowed with the capacity of choice. Indeed without faith in the power of free choice the believers may lose the moral resolve necessary to undertake God's commands and thus becoming apathetic and submissive, unwilling to initiate any action.[115]

Hassan provides an interesting illustration of this point by stating that in the early Islamic era, cowardly men were made courageous by wholeheartedly believing in *qadar* while undertaking God's command and defending the faith. Similarly, the timid became willing to sacrifice their own lives. They did so because they trusted in God that nothing would happen to them except what had already been determined by Him, and that they would never die unless He had decreed that they should. Accordingly, belief in *qadar* made strong men even more courageous and enlivened the weak, so they would not fall into desperation. Hassan's point of view seems to be in line with that of 'Abduh, as Charles C. Adams explains below:

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[115] Ibid., p. 142.

> [T]he belief in God's predetermination of events, if rightly understood, exerted a moral influence of great value. Belief in predestination (*ḳaḍā' wa ḳadar*), if striped of the idea of compulsion, gives rise to characteristics of boldness, daring, courage, steadfastness, generosity, and self-sacrifice on behalf of the truth. If one believes that the limit of one's life is appointed, and his daily sustenance provided, and all things are in the hands of God to direct as He will, how can he fear death in defence of the truth and in the service of his country and his religion, or fear poverty in devoting his substance in accordance with the commands of God.[116]

Unlike those people in the early Islamic era, however, the belief in *qadar* has rendered Muslims of today passive and timid. This, according to Hassan, is because they understand the belief in *qadar* in the wrong way.[117] He reprimands his fellow Muslims for being ill-motivated and unwilling to strive courageously to fulfill the nobility inherent in their nature. Only the weak, according to Hassan, argue that they must mindlessly submit their will and fate entirely to God's decree. They complain that if God willed them to be courageous they would become courageous easily in spite of their passivity. Similarly, they maintain that they would become prosperous and revered if God wished them to be. However, Hassan notes that it is astonishing that such fatalistic people would not also submit themselves to the decree of God for their daily meal and drink. Strictly following this way of reasoning, concludes Hassan, they should not concern themselves with vital needs, since God will give all that is destined. Another interesting illustration is given by Hassan stating that if a person owed some money to his friend, the lender should not demand repayment of the debt, since if God's decree determines all, the lender will get his money back without fail.[118] Due to this line of

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[116] Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muḥammad ʿAbduh* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1968), p. 154.

[117] A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, p. 143.

[118] Ibid. The last example by Hassan is reminiscent of the "*Maymūn* and *Shuʿayb* affair" reported by al-Ashʿarī in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*. The two persons were of the Kharijite sect upholding different point of views regarding the idea of *qadar*. Shuʾayb was reported to have borrowed some money from Maymūn. When Maymūn demanded Shuʿayb to repay his debt, the latter said: "I shall give it to you if God will." Maymūn replied: "God *has* willed that you should give it to me now," upon which Shuʿayb insisted: "If God had willed it, I could not have done otherwise than give it to you." Maymūn said: "Verily, God has willed what He commanded; what He did not command, He did not will, and what He did not will He did not

reasoning, Hassan's work forms an important starting point for the promotion of non-fatalistic belief. Ultimately, the goal was to enhance activism among Muslims of his country. Unfortunately, this concept was never fully developed either by Hassan himself or by any other scholar associated with Persatuan Islam after him.

For the Muhammadiyah, although it is more inclined to fatalistic notions—as shown in its *Kitāb al-Īmān*—later scholars belonging to this association developed a new perspective regarding the relationship of human action to God's omnipotence. Haji ʿAbd al-Malik Karīm Amrullāh, more popularly known through his abbreviated name "Hamka" (1908-1981),[119] for instance, has inspired a new discourse on this issue. In his *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (the Lesson of Islamic Religion), and *Tafsir al-Azhar* he developed an interesting exposition of *qadar* which is quite different from that found in the *Kitāb al-*

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command." In order to resolve their disputation, they agreed to write to ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿAjarrad, their Kharijite leader who was held in prison. In reply to their letter, al-ʿAjarrad wrote to them: "Our doctrine is that what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about; and we did not fix evil upon God." Al-ʿAjarrad's reply reached them when the latter died. Maymūn claimed that his position was supported by the statement "we do not fix evil upon God." On the other hand, Shuʿayb also claimed that al-Ajarrad supported his position by his statement: "what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about." Thus they maintained their association with al-Ajarrad but dissociated themselves from one another, and each of them represented two different trends in the Khari-jite thought: an inclination to Muʿtazilite brand of *qadar* under Maymūn, called Maymūnīyah; and an inclination toward *jabr* represented by Shuʾayb, called Shuʿaybīyah. See Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, p. 93; W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1948), pp. 32-33.

[119] Many scholars have discussed Hamka's personality. Fachry Ali, for instance, has described Hamka as one of the forerunners of Indonesian Islamic modernism. See his "Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahuluan Riwayat dan Perjuangannya." *Prisma* (February 1983); as quoted in M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 15. Gerard Moussay reports that Hamka was one of the most prominent Muslim figures in contemporary Indonesia. Although he did not complete elementary school, he achieved greatness through his self-education, in many fields of arts, including journalism, literature, anthropology, history, politics and Islamic sciences. See Moussay's article, "Une grande figure de l'Islam indonésien: Buya Hamka." *Archipel*, vol. 32 (1986), p. 103. For further discussion of his biography, see Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1966, *an autobiography*); H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983); idem, *Kenang-kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983, *a memoir*); Nasir Tamara, Buntaran Sanusi and Vincent Djauhari (eds.), *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984). For a brief report of his early education, see M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, pp. 34-53. For a critical study of his scholarly career, see Abdurrahman Wahid, "Benarkah Buya Hamka Seorang Besar? Sebuah Pengantar," in *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, pp. 19-50.

Īmān of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*.[120] Hamka, in the former work, begins his discussion by describing the belief in *qadar* as encompassing everything that happens in this world, including what happens to human, good and evil, happy and sad; no single movement in human's life is removed from God's decree or *qadar*.[121] Based on this point of view, a question arises: Are the actions of human by nature free or pre-determined? Basically, according to Hamka, a human is not free. All the plans he might make will not be fully approved and cannot be actualized unless they are made in congruence with the "grand plan" predetermined by God. For example, a human is born into this world but without his consent. He cannot choose his parents, his family, or his social environment. Even the date he is to be born is beyond his control. A newly born baby has no power at all to decide any of these matters although they are directly related to his or her personal interests.[122]

Hamka then refers to the two different trends of Islamic theological thought: the Qadarite and the Jabrite. Like A. Hassan, Hamka also maintains that there are two different groups of verses in the Qur'ān, each of which gives support to either the Qadarite (free will) or Jabrite (predestination, fatalistic) schools of thought. Hamka quotes 2:20 of the Qur'ān: "Allah hath power over all things," on the basis of which he asserts that God has unlimited power. Therefore, if a person says that God does not create evil and cannot make somebody poor or foolish it implies that he has belittled God's omnipotence. However, it would not be allowed for anybody to say that it is God who has made him poor or foolish, and must take a particular way in expressing such an idea to maintain his polite attitude and subservience to God.[123] But Hamka does not specify

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[120] Although Hamka was involved in the Muhammadiyah movement since his youth, and later became an important member of its central leadership board (1953-1971), he always displayed an independence and originality of thought, refusing to be blindly tied to the thought of the organization. He often freely voiced his opinions concerning contemporary issues without waiting for official approval from the Muhammadiyah. This included his exposition of his theological thought that countered the official position outlined in the *Kitāb al-Īmān*. See Milhan Yusuf, "Hamka's Method of Interpreting the Legal Verses of the Qur'an: A Study of His *Tafsir al-Azhar*" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1995), pp. 11-12.

[121] Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, p. 253.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Hamka, as many other Indonesian writers of his age, offers scarcely any reference to support his discussions. In classical Islamic theology, this issue is generally related to the problem of whether or not God creates evil. Hamka, therefore, also

or give an example of how this polite attitude toward God should take form in dealing with divine judgement. He simply indicates that it would be strange if, believing in God's omnipotence, a person justifies his crime on the basis of divine will. For instance, he cannot escape from punishment on the pretext that he committed a crime because God had willed him to do so.[124]

Similar to Hassan, Hamka tends to minimize the difference between the two groups of Qurʾānic verses supporting either fatalistic or non-fatalistic tendencies in Islamic theology. While A. Hassan, as discussed previously, proposes the concept of *ikhtiyār* (endeavor) to reconcile those differences, Hamka's solution simply states that indeed there is freedom for humans to exercise their will, but this freedom is limited. Man's limited freedom is likened to the freedom given to citizens of a country in which everybody should obey the regulations imposed upon all of them. This solution by Hamka is congruent with his earlier statement that all plans proposed by human will not work except when they are made in congruence with the "grand plan" predetermined by God, the creator of the universe. Therefore, Hamka insists that the verses of *jabr* (fatalistic) and *ikhtiyār* (free will) are both equally true.[125] In Hamka's point of view, the verses of *ikhtiyār* indicate that there is freedom for human, but one should not forget that this freedom is limited as shown by the verses of *jabr*.[126] Hamka further emphasizes that both aspects of *jabr* and

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addresses the problem of evil, although he did not fully develop it. His idea may be in agreement with a saying that "God has power over evil but not power to do evil, that is that what God creates is not to be ascribed to Him in the same way as an act is ascribed to an agent and characterizes the agent." This idea was held by Muḥamamd ʿĪsā Burgūth of the Ahl al-Ithbāt, or the "affirmationists." Watt characterizes people belonging to this group as those who affirmed God's *qadar* and held a very definite belief in God's omnipotence. Their driving power came from truly Qurʾānic outlooks and not from pre-Islamic fatalism. Watt further notices that the term Ahl al-Ithbāt is only found in al-Ashʿarī's work *Maqālāt*. Among the theologian figures included into this group are Ḍirār, al-Najjār, Burghūth, al-Kushānī, Muḥammad b. Ḥarb, and Yaḥyā b. Abī Kāmil. Although Ḍirār was claimed to be its most prominent figure in the group, it was rather al-Najjār whose formulation of doctrines was considered the fundamental norm to be adopted as the identity of the group. See W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination*, pp. 112-116; idem, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 116-118. See also al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, pp. 201-203.

[124] Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 258-259.

[125] In Hamka's list, including into fatalistic verses are: 2:8, 11:34, 39:19, 16:36, and 76:30. Including into free will verses are: 76:3, 6:123, 4:110, and 13:12. See ibid., pp. 262-264.

[126] Ibid., p. 264.

ikhtiyār represent the original forms of spiritual instruction for humans. A human may grow arrogant with his personal success and become presumptuous regarding the capacity of his agency. He does not realize that indeed his success is due to the blessing of God bestowed upon him. Therefore, one must be aware that it is possible that someday God will change His favor and withdraw His blessing, so that he will soon fall into misery.

Hamka refers to an example of how humans successfully split the atom. This was a seminal achievement in science, but it has become a horror since it has been used to destroy cities and now threatens with the fear of global annihilation. In such conditions, Hamka reminds his readers, humans should remember the verses of *jabr*, in which God has explained His unlimited power. The individual's achievement is no more than God's blessing upon him. Yet, if the individual falls into misery, he should not become apathetic, since God has decreed that the individual's negligence, i.e., his unwillingness to employ his reason to overcome his predicaments, would bring him into danger. Therefore, it is incumbent for human in such a condition to refer to the verses of *ikhtiyār*. He should remember that humans are the best of creation, for whom all the oceans and lands are created. Time and again God has reminded human through His statements: "Don't you think," "don't you consider?" "Aren't you given eyes to see, ears to listen, mind to contemplate?" All of these are special gifts from God to human. According to Hamka, the fatalistic verses do not give license to be submissive or to behave childishly under the protection of God. The gift of reason demands that human not take such an attitude. The free will verses therefore should enliven human and inspire dynamic resolve.[127] Yet, Hamka acknowledges the efficacy of both the fatalistic and non-fatalistic verses of the Qur'ān in human's life as being equally important. They balance each other.

In the remainder of the book, Hamka also discusses some crucial issues dealing with real experiences in human life. For example, it occasionally happens that those who commit crime escape punishment, while righteous people are punished. Hamka tries to solve this problem by asking: "Should we determine God's will, or is it God who determines our will?" Based on this rhetorical inquiry, Hamka insists that it is not difficult to overcome this problem, insofar as

[127] Ibid., p. 266.

the individual's heart is filled with trust in God. When people who have committed crimes are released without punishment, in reality, their release is itself a punishment. On the contrary, if the righteous persons are put into jail, it is not really a punishment. Hamka argues that people who intentionally stay away from God and disdain His commands are cursed with a life of punishment, although they may dwell in palaces. But for those who do not transgress God's commands, their life is grace, even though they have to live behind the bars.[128] That is the solution given by Hamka in his discussion under the heading "Everything Is under the Rule of *Taqdīr.*"[129] To sum up, for Hamka, a deep-rooted belief and trust in God's omnipotence will give relief to people in their attempt to cope with the problem of injustice. Unfortunately, Hamka's discussion of this issue is less than illuminating. It is a gross oversimplification to assert that the very complicated problem of injustice in human life can be sufficiently solved by a deep-rooted belief in God. Hamka may have based his argument on his own personal experience and worldview as a devout Muslim preacher (*muballigh*), with an inclination toward Sufism, and

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[128] In Hamka's biography we are informed that in 1964 Hamka was arrested and put into jail by the Sukarno regime, on an accusation of plotting subversive actions. These charges were due to the rise of Anti-Sukarno Movement (Gerakan Anti Sukarno, GAS) which involved some Muslim figures from the MASYUMI. The accusation was never proven, however, but they were not even released from jail until the Sukarno regime collapsed in early 1966. It would be interesting to know whether or not Hamka realized what he had written about ten years earlier concerning this experience. Yet, during his arrest Hamka was reported to have retained his productivity with his scholarly works, writing his voluminous *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Hamka regarded this imprisonment as a "divine wisdom" (*hikmah Ilahi*), since he believed that otherwise he probably would not have completed his *Tafsir* due to his being unable to leave his day-to-day life. Hamka also believed that his imprisonment had "preserved" him from the filth of despotism. He expresses this in the following statement: "[I have to be] grateful to God, because during two years and four months I have been preserved by God, so that I was free from the filth of the despotic era. Probably, had I been out there at that time, I would have had to follow the way of the hypocrites in order to save my life, being compelled to support the tyrannical regime which was definitely against my heart." See his *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982), vol. 1, p. 57. For the account of his life in prison, see Hamka, "Prof. Dr. Raden Kasman Singodimedjo al-Haj: Kenangan Setelah Usianya Mencapai 75 Tahun," in Panitia Peringatan 75 Tahun Kasman, *Hidup Itu Berjuang: Kasman Singodimedjo 75 Tahun* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), pp. 368-383. Like Hamka, Singodimedjo was a leader of both the MASYUMI and Muhammadiyah, and was put into jail together with the former. For a brief account of his writing of the *Tafsir al-Azhar*, see "Hikmah Ilahi" a part of his introductory remarks to his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 1, pp. 50-58.

[129] Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 272-274.

who revelled in all the joy and hardships of religious struggle.

A heavy reliance on rationality and an emphasis on free will seem to be more apparent features of Hamka's theological thought, a tendency clearly manifested in his monumental work, the *Tafsir al-Azhar*. He holds reason in high esteem, on the grounds that it has the capacity to guide human to attaining the truth. For Hamka, the quality of reason determines human's intellectual capacity to judge his own actions, either good or evil. More significantly, it is through reason that the individual begins to understand the signs of God, as compiled in the Qur'ān.[130] Some of the Qur'ānic signs that have remained unintelligible since revelation may at last be elucidated through scientific progress. Hamka refers to the Qur'ānic verse "Soon will We show them Our signs in the horizons (of the world), and in their own selves until it becometh manifest unto them that He is the Truth" (41:53). Hamka argues that this signifies that the ultimate truth of the Qur'ān will be more widely discovered through scientific progress. As an example, Hamka mentions the atom (*dharrah*), the smallest substance in the universe, which is also encompassed in the knowledge of God. It can hardly be imagined how early Muslims understood this concept when the verse was first revealed to the Prophet. It was only fourteen centuries later that humans could truly understand its nature, thanks to scientific achievement. Therefore, concludes Hamka, the more science advances, the more extensively the truths of the Qur'ān will be uncovered.[131]

As has been noted previously, Hamka admits the validity of grouping of some Qur'ānic verses relating to human's actions and God's omnipotence into a fatalistic tendency on the one hand and a tendency toward free will on the other. Nevertheless, as reported by M. Yunan Yusuf, Hamka interprets the fatalistic verses in a different way so as to give a sense of free will.[132] For instance, in interpreting "God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing, and upon their sight is a covering, and for them is a great chastisement" (2:7), Hamka insists that the seal (*khatam*) is a label or stamp of unbelief given by Allah to people after they have refused to accept the truth. The label of being an infidel cannot be changed or removed, and thus nothing can turn them into believers. Such an interpretation implies that

[130] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 103.
[131] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 25, p. 7.
[132] M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 120.

those people labeled by God as infidels have been predetermined to be so and therefore it gives an impression of fatalism. Hamka, however, disagrees with this idea, and suggests that one must examine why some people become infidels while others become believers. According to Hamka's point of view, their disbelief is due to arrogance, dissidence, and obstinacy. Thus the label of infidel is merely a result of their own attitude toward the truth revealed by God. Therefore, in Hamka's opinion, it is not due to God's determination that they have become infidels, but due to their own choice. They could have either accepted or refused the truth that God in His mercy has revealed. The choice, once made, leads a soul down its adopted path. A stamp is then sealed on the heart identifying its character as either believer or infidel. Hamka's assessment seems to be in line with the idea held by Muʿtazilite theologians in their interpretation of the Qur'ānic passage 2:7, as follows:

> The general idea underlying the interpretation of such passages was that God's sealing of men's hearts was something which followed on their unbelief and did not precede or cause it. Some held that it was the testimony and judgement that these men do not in fact believe and that it did not prevent them from believing. Others, while agreeing that the seal did not prevent a man from believing, adopted the more picturesque interpretation that it was the black mark placed on the heart of an unbeliever so that the angels may know that he is one of 'the enemies of God' and not [H]is 'friends.'[133]

Since Hamka refuses to interpret this verse in a fatalistic sense, he emphasizes that a Muslim preacher (*muballigh*) should not assume that it would be useless to call people into Islam. Islam will flourish, insists Hamka, only through the summons (*daʿwah*), and insofar as its thinkers unceasingly devote their life to uncovering the secrets of Islam in order to implement the way of the righteous in the social and individual spheres. Otherwise, Islam will become morally frozen. Indeed, the verse regarding the seal upon hearts is meant as a warning for the Prophet that he should never despair in propagating Islam. It is, on the contrary, intended to encourage him and his followers to spread Islamic teachings more vigorously, since the stamp of identity meant by this verse is only a label for obstinacy and arrogance, and is not a final judgement. With resolve, Muslims can summon them to Islam.[134]

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[133] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 233.
[134] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 1, pp. 130-132.

The above passage from the Qur'ān dealing with the idea of *khatam*, or "seal," is only one among several other verses conveying a similar concept. Moreover, the word *khatam* is not only used to describe the heart but is also applied to the mouth (83:25) and the ears (45:22), signifying that God reprimands unbelievers for their improper use of these physical organs. Had they used them properly, they would have been able to perceive God's signs correctly, which, in turn, would lead them to accept Islam. Hamka is not alone in interpreting the "verse of *khatam*" in a non-fatalistic sense. Daud Rahbar, for instance, in his discussion of God's justice maintains that the "verses of *khatam"* have two different directions of interpretation. On the one hand, they tell Muslims to give up calling infidels to Islam since their hearts, being sealed by God, are hardened. On the other hand, the verses serve as a reprimand to the unbelievers themselves. According to this interpretation, the sealing is a result of their disbelief, and not vice versa. This is similar to Hamka's position noted previously. Like Hamka, Rahbar seems to be more inclined to the second viewpoint in interpreting the sealing of the unbelievers' hearts as a consequence of their disbelief. Rahbar fortifies his argument by citing other Qur'ānic verses dealing with God leading astray unbelievers as a result of their idolatry (45:22). Therefore, Rahbar concludes that it would be incorrect to assume that *khatam* is the result of God's arbitrary sealing of human's heart.[135]

Another example of how Hamka interprets fatalistic verses in terms of the spirit of free will can be seen in his interpretation of "What! Is he on whom the sentence of chastisement hath been justly passed (*equal to one who deserveth a reward*)? Canst thou rescue him who is in fire?" (39:19). This verse pronounces, in an interrogative fashion, a rejection of the idea in question. In other words, it is impossible for Muḥammad to rescue people condemned to hellfire, since during their lifetime they fell into the temptations of evil, did wrong, and followed the path of unbelief up until judgement day. Therefore, their destiny is Hell, and they will never find their way to Paradise. Hamka emphasizes that the choice to follow the right way to Paradise must be made in this worldly lifetime, by believing in God and fulfilling His commands, and should not be postponed until later in the hereaf-

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[135] Daud Rahbar, *God of Justice: A Study in the Ethical Doctrine of the Qur'an* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), pp. 126-128.

ter.[136] On this point, Hamka may be contrasted with the upholders of fatalism, who contend that "man is compelled (*majbūr*) in his actions, having no power (*ḳudrah*) and no will and no choice."[137] Therefore, "reward and punishment, like human actions, are subject to compulsion (*jabr*),"[138] and furthermore, "if God punishes a man whose acts are mainly good, [H]e is not unjust, since [H]e is not obliged to reward good acts,"[139] and vice versa. Likewise, according to al-Ashʿarī's idea, "[w]ith regard to the eternal rewards and punishments, a problem of justice does not even arise; for, regardless what God does with us, 'the Lord of the Worlds is not under a *sharīʿah*,' and therefore justice and injustice cannot be predicated to His acts in any sense intelligible to us."[140] In contrast, Hamka's *qadarī* point of view seems to be in agreement with the idea held by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642-728) that God does not predetermine the human being to a good or bad course of action, since God only judges the human being according to his free actions.[141]

It is interesting, however, that Hamka does not interpret all of the fatalistic verses in accordance with the spirit of free will. This tendency may reflect his belief that, as noted previously, although human has freedom of will, this freedom is limited. The individual is obliged to follow God's will as revealed through the prophets. Hamka expresses this idea in his interpretation of "Verily this is a reminder, so whosoever pleaseth, taketh unto his Lord the (right) way. And ye desire not save what God desireth; verily God is all knowing, the all wise" (76:29-30). In appearance, these two verses are contradictory: while the first indicates that human has freedom either to consider God's reminder or to ignore it, the second is understood

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[136] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 24, pp. 32-33.

[137] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 606, citing from al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, p. 60.

[138] Ibid., quoting *al-Milal*, p. 61.

[139] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 106.

[140] George F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of ʾAbd al-J̌abbār* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 12, based on al-Ashʿarī's *al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyānah*, p. 50.

[141] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 102. Al-Ḥassan's argument is based on his interpretation of the Qurʾānic verse "God sends astray whom He will" (13.27) which must be correlated with another similar verse "God sends astray the evildoers" (14:27). It implies that the phrase "whom He will" in the former verse must be understood as being specified with another phrase in the latter, "the evildoers."

by Hamka as abrogating that freedom entirely, since human will not be able to realize what he desires except when it is willed by God. In other words, while the first part of the verse is inclined to the Qadarīyah position regarding the freedom of will, the latter part is inclined to Jabarīyah position in the sense that the human being has no choice at all, since it is to Allah alone that all power belongs. However, in Hamka's point of view, this contradiction is the result of an "equitable confluence" between human's endeavor (*ikhtiyār*) and trust in God (*tawakkul*). Accordingly, Hamka further suggests, the individual should implore God to open his heart, to grant the power to progress, and to supply the succor (*tawfiq*) for success, in conformity with God's omnipotence, will, knowledge and wisdom.[142]

When Hamka interprets the fatalistic verses in terms of the spirit of free will, it is fairly reasonable to say that his discussion of the free will verses is more clearly "*qadarian*." For instance, in interpreting "Verily have We shown him the (right) way, be he grateful or ungrateful" (76:3), Hamka asserts that the individual, after having been exposed to God's guidance, sho uld be able to properly use his reason, follow the correct moral values and accept the truth contained in the revelation. But since humans are by nature frequently forgetful of God's bounty, God purposely makes worldly life a trial to uncover the true mettle of a believer. Faith is therefore distinguished from unbelief by the path one chooses and by one's resolve to maintain it. Hamka refers to the verse "And (know ye) verily this My path, is the straight one, so ye follow it, and follow ye not (other) ways for they will scatter you away from His path; this doth He enjoins you with, so that ye may guard (yourselves against evil)" (6:153), to support his argument. In effect, God has offered two different ways for human to choose: the straight path or the errant one. While the errant path is the one paved by Satan to tempt human weakness and is filled with polytheism, obscurantism and heresies, the straight path is taken under the guidance of God.[143] Therefore, since the difference between the two paths is clear, it is up to the individual's own consideration to decide which path to follow. To emphasize this freedom of choice God has stated: "And say thou: The truth is from your Lord; so let him who pleaseth believe; and let him who

[142] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 29, pp. 297-298; M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 122.
[143] Hamka, ibid., vol. 8, p. 128.

pleaseth disbelieve, verily We have prepared for the unjust (the Hell) fire" (18:29). It is not God who makes humans believe or disbelieve. Moreover, based on the fact that humans are normally empowered with intellectual reasoning, it is their responsibility to make the effort to maintain the straight path. No one else can be blamed for one's own misfortune or folly. God has reminded humans through His statement: "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves" (13:11). Thus, Hamka argues, in order to follow the path of Allah the believer must use the intellect and become an active agent. There is no excuse to simply surrender to one's fate, "like a piece of cotton being blown away by the wind."[144]

In addition to this discussion of free-will and predestination, it is equally important to examine how Hamka interprets the idea of God's omnipotence and absolute will with regard to human acts. Hamka asserts that divine will is absolute and in exercising His power God employs His highest wisdom. It means that since God is all wise (*al-ḥakīm*), He never exercises His absolute power of His will arbitrarily. All of His acts are based on, and full of, wisdom. Hamka develops this idea in his discussion of the attributes of God, in which he considers wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) as one of His attributes equal in merit to both *al-qudrah* (power) and *al-irādah* (will).[145] However, Hamka

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[144] Ibid., vol. 13, p. 71. The above phraseology is very popular among the Muslim writers in describing human's position in fatalistic belief. It can be traced back to Muḥammad ʿAbduh in his discussion of *al-Qaḍā' wa'l-Qadar*, in which he states "*anna al-muslimīn bi-ʿaqīdat al-qaḍā' yarawna anfusahum ka'l-rīshat al-muʿallaqat fi'l-hawā' tuqabbiluhā al-riyāḥ kayfamā tamīl*," that Muslims, in their belief in God's decree, are like a feather hung in the air, being blown by the wind and driven to which ever direction the wind moves. This article first appeared in *al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā*, vol. 7, (May 1884), and reprinted in Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tārīkh al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh* (Cairo: al-Manār, 1344 H.), vol. 2, pp. 259-267.

[145] Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 76-77. It is unique to Hamka to consider *al-ḥikmah* as an attribute of God equal to His *qudrah* and *irādah* and the other attributes. Unlike other writers in Islamic theology, Hamka, in discussing the attributes of God, does not follow the ordinary way outlined by Muslim theologians such as al-Ashʿarī or al-Māturīdī. Hamka apparently mixes God's attributes and His most beautiful names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*). Based on this unique approach, he discusses the attributes of God (although he does not specifically put it under the title of the attributes of God) consisting of *al-wujūd* (existence); *al-awwal* (He is the first without the beginning); *al-ākhir* (He is the last and the eternal, without ending); *laysa ka-mithlih shay'* (He is the unique, He resembles nothing); *al-ghanī* (He is the rich, self sufficient, having no need to anything); *al-waḥdānīyah* (the absolute unity); *al-qudrah wa'l-irādah* (having absolute power and will); *al-ḥikmah* (the highest wisdom); *al-ʿilm* (knowledge); *al-samʿ wa'l-baṣar* (hearing and seeing); and *al-kalām* (speaking). It is not clear, however, what

does not explicitly state that God's power and will are limited by His wisdom, but maintains that in exercising power and will God follows the "pattern" of His wont. This is the *sunnat Allāh*, commonly understood as the perfect and unchangeable "laws of nature." Based on this idea too Hamka insists that, although God is absolutely powerful, and is thus able to make all men believers, He does not do so, because if He did it would imply that His wisdom is meaningless. A human is bestowed with the capacity to exercise free will. This makes him different from plants and animals which are created as automata; growing, flourishing and decaying in accordance with their given nature. Human, through his intellect, is able to choose his own fate. It is human's own responsibility, therefore, either to recognize God's wisdom and believe, or to refuse it and become an infidel. Moreover, since God's power and will are exercised with all wisdom (and justice?), it is absurd to maintain that God wills wrongdoing by punishing righteous people and rewarding the evildoers. Consequently, Hamka insists that the belief that God has the capacity to unjustly punish the righteous and reward the evildoers is misguided. Indeed there have been some unjust Muslim rulers, one of whom claimed that he ruled on behalf of God by adopting the title al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, the ruler on the authority of God.[146]

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his basic argument to formulate the attributes of God as such is. On the other hand, it is also unclear why, for instance, he does not include *al-ʿadl* (justice) with God's attributes, and puts "wisdom" instead. For Hamka, the attribute of justice may have been included into the concept of wisdom, since in discussing the latter he mentions cursorily that justice is the perfect attribute of God, but without further elaboration.

[146] Hamka does not specify which Muslim ruler (and of which era or dynasty) claimed himself to be al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. However, in Islamic history, the ruler with such a title refers to Abū ʿAlī al-Manṣūr, the sixth Fatimid caliph of Egypt (985-1021), who succeeded his father at the age of eleven. The young Abū ʿAlī al-Manṣūr was proclaimed as a new caliph on the instruction of his father who was on his deathbed. On his caliphal innauguration, al-Manṣūr was solemnly presented to the dignitaries in the great *īwān* of the Palace, seated on a golden throne, and was greeted with the title of *imām* with the *laqab* of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. Al-Ḥākim ruled as an absolute despot, obeying only his own caprice and mood, decreeing the most extraordinary and the most unpopular measures. His reign was characterized as a time of terror, overwhelmed with a great number of executions and cruelties as well as rebellions and manifestations of discontent among the population. He was also notorious for his eccentricities, verging on madness and his claim to be recognized as divine. However, there is no clear account of his theological inclination, either to support fatalism or free will. Nevertheless, as an Ismāʿīlī ruler, he was reported to have upheld a religious fanaticism, especially through enhancing a spirit of Shiʿism, while taking harsh measures against Christians, Jews, and even with

Hamka dismisses this claim outright. His rule was not based on the will of God. He only abused the name of God to justify his arbitrary and despotic rule and to legitimize the oppression of his subjects on the pretext of defending the authority of God. Hamka considers his rule to be the rule of those who have no sense of wisdom or responsibility.[147]

Hamka's discussion of free will and predestination has shed a new light on the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. To a certain degree, it has been a key work in the attempt to transform Indonesian Muslim religious attitudes. According to Hamka's point of view, the negative influence of fatalistic doctrines and the deprivation of the spirit of free will caused the backwardness of Muslims.[148] Unlike the attempts of Mansoer and Hassan to eradicate polytheism, the works of Hamka attempt to reconstruct Muslims' understanding of Islam. It is no longer a question of custom versus the revealed truth, but rather it concerns the human capacity to comprehend truth. Thus Hamka has made another great contribution to the enrichment of Islamic theological discourse. His *Tafsir al-Azhar* gives a fresh understanding of the belief in *al-qaḍā' wa'l-qadar*. As can be clearly seen in the above examples, Hamka's interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses relating to the idea of God's decree was intended to arouse the spirit of his fellow Muslims as well as to unite them in a common goal of achieving new progress in worldly life. In addition to noting some historical events of the early Islamic period, Hamka frequently makes references to the progress made by other civilizations beyond the Islamic world, like the Japanese, European and American. Of course it is difficult to determine to what extent his discussion of free will and predestination in both his *Peladjaran Agama Islam* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* actually transformed Indonesian religious

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Sunnī Muslims. See M. Conard, "al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 3, pp. 76-82; Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), pp. 330-337. However, being a despotic Muslim ruler with arbitrary oppression was not to be ascribed solely to al-Ḥākim of the Fatimid. There were numerous Muslim rulers who made use of the title of *khalīfat Allāh*, the deputy of God, as a pretext to legitimize their unjust and oppressive reigns. With this claim, they demanded Muslims to obey their rule, since obeying the Caliph is equal to obeying God; and disobeying the Caliph or his agents is equally a refusal to acknowledge the authority of God. See Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 84-85.

147 *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, p. 77.

148 M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 115.

attitudes. A full analysis of its social impact is beyond the scope of this study, and thus requires further efforts to examine it. But his attempts to introduce a new formulation of a non-fatalistic Islamic worldview is echoed in other subsequent writers among the Muhammadiyah, such as H.A. Malik Ahmad, Abd al-Rahim Nur, H.A. Azhar Basyir, and Yunahar Ilyas.[149]

After Hamka, a tendency toward a non-fatalistic worldview steadily grew more noticeable in daily life and throughout society. An interesting example of this change can be seen in a conference on Islamic theology and development held in Yogyakarta, in 1988. Zamakhsyari Dhofier, one among those who spoke at the conference—in his discussion of al-Ashʿarī's theology and the Indonesian development programs—stated that almost every person in Indonesia today rushed for material progress. A person not only demanded that his basic needs be fulfilled, but also required a house, car, video player or satellite TV; and would even disrespect the rights of others to obtain them. The people's love of wealth today was explicitly exaggerated, and so was their eagerness to achieve further progress in the fields of culture and education. Had they been loyal adherents of Ashʿarite theology with its fatalistic doctrines, so Dhofier concludes, it would be impossible to witness such an increase in the demand to gain a better worldly life.[150] Federspiel has more clearly paraphrased Dhofir's account in the following citation:

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[149] Each of these writers, except the second, has discussed the problem of free will and predetermination as a part of their examination of the principal beliefs of Islam. Their works dealing with this issue are: H.A. Malik Ahmad, *Akidah: Pembahasan-pembahasan Mengenai Allah dan Taqdir* (Jakarta: al-Hidayah, 1985); Abd. Rahim Nur, *Percaya Kepada Taqdir Membawa Kemajuan atau Kemunduran* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1987); H. A. Azhar Basyir, *Pendidikan Agama Islam I (Aqidah)* (Yogyakarta: Perpustakaan Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Indonesia, 1995); and Yunahar Ilyas, *Kuliah Aqidah Islam* (Yogyakarta: LPPI-Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 1993). They all agree to emphasize that Muslims should understand the doctrine of free will and predetermination proportionately, and encourage them to turn to non-fatalistic theology for their betterment of the worldly life.

[150] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Teologi al-Asyʿari dan Pembangunan," in M. Masyhur Amin (ed.), *Teologi Pembangunan: Paradigma Baru Pemikiran Islam* (Yogyakarta: LKPSM-NU, 1988), pp. 39-43. However, a deep reconsideration of the necessity of adopting non-fatalistic theological worldview may have emerged only late among the traditionalists. This can be seen, for instance, from the publication of Machasin's work, *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia: Telaah Kritis terhadap Konsepsi al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: INHIS-Pustaka Pelajar, 1996). In his preface, the publisher explicitly mentions that this book may be the first work written by a traditionalist scholar in this controversial issue dealing with human's freedom and predestination. Yet, although in his conclusion Machasin admits human's freedom of choice distinguishes him from other creations, this freedom

> [F]atalism is not really a part of al-Ashʿari's doctrine as is popularly assumed, even though he recognizes the power of God as absolute. [Dhofier] observes further that in contemporary Indonesia the Friday sermons of the religious scholars do not ask worshippers to be fatalistic, but, rather, stress the responsibilities of humans for the conduct of their own lives and that of the nation. Still the attitude of fatalism persists among much of the population, raising [rhetorical] question of whether Islam's theological models are correctly formulated or, more likely, whether the explanations of the creed is properly understood by contemporary society. Dhofier believes the latter explanation to be more likely.[151]

It must be kept in mind, however, that such an inclination was not particularly found in Indonesia at the time indicated by Dhofier. Even in the time of ʿAbduh, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Muslims—as ʿAbduh himself testified—were not completely fatalistic. In addition, indeed within the Ashʿarite theology itself there is a notion of free choice within the doctrine of "acquisition," or *kasb*. This term, which has its origin in classical Islamic theology, is believed to be the basis of reward and punishment. Therefore, from ʿAbduh's perspective, although the belief in *al-qaḍā' wa'l-qadar* was once contaminated with traces of belief in compulsion and thus caused misfortunes that have befallen them, through the passing of time, this belief turned out to be more moderate.[152]

Hamka has established a firm foundation for further development of an Islamic resurgence in Indonesia. It is also interesting to notice that through his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Hamka, in reality, preceded Harun Nasution in introducing certain Muʿtazilī concepts concerning the freedom of action and moral responsibility. But, unlike Nasution, Hamka was never explicit in this enterprise. Without actually mentioning that the concept he offered was based on Muʿtazilism, he would use it directly to interpret the Qur'ānic verses relating to a specific issue. Yet there was no protest against his approach to his *Tafsīr*, although he had started to introduce these ideas much earlier

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is not unlimited. The unlimited power only belongs to God. He gives freedom to human only in the fields of voluntarily actions (*ikhtiyārīyah*), by virtue of which God will apply His promise and threat (*al-waʿd wa'l-waʿīd*). Human's freedom lies within his practical ethics, but not in ontological terms. Nevertheless, human has to maintain his belief in mysterious matters, by virtue of which he may be able to resist any form of turbulence in life. See ibid., pp. 143-144..

[151] Howard M. Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1992), p. 32.

[152] Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism*, pp. 152-153.

than Harun Nasution.[153] Perhaps it was due to the fact that the approach of Hamka was much less scholarly. While Nasution offered his reinterpretation of Muʿtazilī doctrine through IAIN, which greatly shocked the older *ʿulamāʾ*, Hamka, by contrast, successfully planted the seeds of rationality in religious attitudes by the means of his *Tafsīr*. Hamka, therefore, was much more effective in reviving Muslim faith in the pious use of rationality. However, inducements to avoid a fatalistic worldview and endorsements to work hard have been prescribed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founding father of the Muhammadiyah, since the first time he initiated this reform movement. It fell, however, to subsequent scholars to reformulate it within a clear theological framework. Moreover, the foundation of the organization was actually meant to facilitate that moral injunction in order for it to be realized more effectively and to serve as a vehicle to implement its values.[154]

E. The Social Dimension of Tawḥīd: A Further Development

Since the time of Dahlan, the Muhammadiyah has been concerned with theology, in the sense of fostering purity in religious belief and practice. Many scholars associated with this movement have offered new theological outlooks, either to enrich its subject matter, reinterpret past formulations, or to broaden its horizons. But the principal concern has been how to best interpret the concept of *al-tawḥīd* with respect to the current challenges of human need. So far, I have discussed the theological concepts offered by Mas Mansoer, Djarnawi Hadikusuma and Hamka of the Muhammadiyah on one side, and Hassan of Persatuan Islam on the other. In general, the dominant theological issues they have discussed can be characterized as largely dealing with the purity of religious belief and the use of intellectual reasoning in support of scriptural proofs. The latter is a tendency most clearly associated with the works of Hamka. Through his voluminous

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[153] Hamka started his *Tafsir* in a regular lecture he delivered every morning in his grand mosque, Masjid Agung al-Azhar, Jakarta, in the early 1960s. However, the draft of the *Tafsir* was not completed until he worked on it during his imprisonment for more than two years in the mid-1960s, an event—as has been noted earlier—which he considered to be a "blessing in disguise."

[154] M. Rusli Karim, "Modus Baru Partisipasi Muhammadiyah," in M. Rusli Karim (ed.), *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentar* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), p. 275.

Tafsīr, Hamka has marked a new stage in this development. He may be considered, on the basis of this, the most prominent of the early Muhammadiyah "theologians." The progress made by Muhammadiyah scholars after him is quite different, especially if we compare his works with that of M. Amien Rais, A. Syafii Maarif, Kuntowijoyo and M. Amin Abdullah, just to mention but a few examples among contemporary Muhammadiyah scholars. It is interesting, therefore, to examine the current development of theological discourse undertaken by these contemporary scholars. For the sake of brevity, however, I will focus on M. Amien Rais (b. 1944), who was the chairman of the Muhammadiyah for three years (1995-1998), before his appointment as the leader of the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN), in 1998.[155] Rais, however, has not written a book specifically on theology. Therefore, in order to understand his theological views, one must examine his works on this subject matter, appearing in a number of articles originally delivered at seminars or published in newspapers or journals.[156]

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[155] Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) or the National Mandate Party is one of the numerous political parties that emerged after the fall of the New Order regime under Suharto in 1998. The emergence of PAN was sponsored by the Majelis Amanat Rakyat (MARA), one of the people's organs promoting political reform movements during the end of Suharto's era. Members of the MARA include M. Amien Rais, Goenawan Mohammad, Rizal Ramli, Albert Hasibuan, Emil Salim, Toety Heraty, and other prominent scholars and politicians. In a meeting in the early August 1998, they agreed to found a new political party, called Partai Amanat Bangsa (PAB). But, later, knowing that the word *Bangsa* (nation) was also used by another newly established party, Patai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) of the NU-based community, it decided upon Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN). PAN was proclaimed on August 23rd 1998, with M. Amien Rais as its first leader. Taking a white shining sun with a dark-blue background as its symbol, this party aims at upholding the people's sovereignty, promoting social justice and enhancing material as well as spiritual prosperity. With the Pancasila as its foundation, the ideals of the party are to be based on religious morality, humanism and pluralism. Although this party won only 7 % of the votes in the general election held in June 1999, it could succeed in posting its leader as the head of the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), and placing its four other functionaries as the Cabinet ministers. See "Wajah 48 Partai," *Kompas Online*, http://www.kompas.com/pemilu/partai/15pan.htm, [accessed 11 May 1999]; Al Chaidar, *Pemilu 1999: Pertarungan Ideologis Partai-partai Islam versus Partai-partai Sekuler* (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 1999), pp. 122-125; Arskal Salim, *Partai-partai Islam dan Relasi Agama-Negara* (Jakarta: JPPR, 1999), p. 21.

[156] As an activist, Rais is always very busy with social and (lately) political affairs. It is almost hopeless to think that he found enough time to do research or to write a book that covers all of his ideas systematically and comprehensively. Of course, as a scholar, he wrote many articles for newspapers or magazines and journals, as well as workpapers presented in various seminars, both inland and abroad. Moreover,

Unlike other scholars whose works have been discussed above, Rais is more eloquent in voicing the "social implications" of the principle of *tawḥīd*. His deep concern with the poor condition of grass root communities—due to the prevalent economic and political injustices during the New Order period—is reflected in his keen speeches and articles. His thoughtful ideas are deemed to be clearly perceptible, because he always articulates them with simple and direct expressions. In ways similar to the methods of some earlier scholars among the Muhammadiyah, Rais mostly bases his arguments on the textual guidance provided by and contained in the Holy Scripture. However, his quotations are not as precise as is usually the case among Muslim scholars. In particular, when he makes a direct citation of a Qur'ānic passage, he transcribes the text in Roman characters rather than in Arabic, which has led to considerable criticism. Nevertheless, Rais' main concern is not to offer a purely theological discussion like that provided by Mansoer, Hassan or Hamka. On the contrary, Rais draws upon the perspective of doctrinal Islam in order to examine the current condition of Muslim social and cultural life from the perspective of doctrinal Islam with the assistance of modern scientific framework. In other words, Rais tries to reformulate the relevance of Islamic doctrines with the real day-to-day issues of Indonesian Muslims. This tendency is common lately, especially among those Muslim scholars who have had advanced training in the West. Rais, thanks to his acquaintance with the modern scientific framework, has used scientific and empirical approaches to reinterpret the universal message of Islam. Therefore, his discussion of justice and *tawḥīd*, for instance, is not merely theological, but also empirical, and thus more colorful.

M. Amien Rais is well known for his concept of "*Tauhid Sosial*," or "Social *Tawḥīd*," through which formula he asserts that the belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) should be manifested in one's endeavor to promote social justice. In other words, the belief in the oneness of

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there have been hundreds of speeches delivered by Rais in campuses, mosques and public gatherings. It is through the compilation of these workpapers, articles and transcripts of his speeches that his ideas are accessible to public readers. For a brief biography of M. Amien Rais, see his *Membangun Politik Adiluhung: Membumikan Tauhid Sosial, Menegakkan Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* (Bandung: Zaman Wacana Pustaka, 1998), pp. 45-79. For the purpose of discussing his theological views concerning the social dimension of *tawḥīd*, I will rely on his *Tauhid Sosial: Formula Menggempur Kesenjangan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), and *Visi dan Missi Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 1997).

God has a social dimension in the sense that every Muslim upholding this belief should manifest his faith through concrete attempts to establish social justice.[157] This is because Rais believes that the concept of *tawḥīd* "gives every Muslim the assurance that a society can be built that is free from the characteristics of exploitation, feudalism and rejection of differentiation among class, race, genetic differences and so forth."[158] Rais further reminds his fellow Muslims that every form of Islamic ritual devotion, such as prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage contains social value. Prayer, for instance, is not merely a rite devoted by a worshipper to his Lord, but there is also a clear social advantage in performing it together in congregation. It demonstrates the principles of leadership and duty. Based on this principle, Rais argues that a true Muslim will realize that prayer has the ability to reinforce certain democratic values, which are necessary for preserving and maintaining values in the community; as well, *zakāh* and other types of religious donations, like *ṣadaqah*, *hadīyah*, *hibah* and *waqf*. All of these types of religious donations are not merely pious offering made by a Muslim to his Lord. They also have a profound social dimension. These types of devotional rites, in Rais' opinion, encourage a "leveling process" with respect to social welfare, which is a key principle in most advanced social democracies of the contemporary era. Similarly, the obligation of fasting and pilgrimage may serve as a means of promoting economic solidarity.[159]

Indeed, the Muhammadiyah's deep concern with the issue of social justice was first established by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan who asserted that *īmān* should create emotions, ideas, wishes, good behavior, and any other virtue which might encourage a believer to act rightly.[160] It implies that true belief in the oneness of God must continue to be reflected in those virtues in Muslims' daily life, including their awareness of social justice. Dahlan demonstrated a very good example of how those virtues may be implemented. He selects seventeen groups of Qur'ānic verses for his students to learn. These are now known as *17 Kelompok Ayat-ayat al-Qur'ān Ajaran K.H. Ahmad Dahlan*, (Seventeen

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[157] M. Amien Rais, *Tauhid Sosial*, pp. 107-108.

[158] Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals*, p. 69.

[159] M. Amien Rais, *Tauhid Sosial*, p. 108. "Leveling process" is a term used by Rais in this work. It is meant to indicate the process of even distribution to achieve equal justice especially in economic gain, through putting religious donations into function for improving public welfare.

[160] A. Jainuri, "The Formation of the Muhammadiyah's Ideology," p. 138.

Groups of the Qur'ānic Verses Taught by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan) which was compiled by one of his direct students, K.R.H. Hadjid.[161] Dahlan maintained that when studying each of these Qur'ānic passages, one was not allowed to proceed to the next until it was not only properly understood (in terms of its meaning and interpretation), but its message could also be implemented in day-to-day practices. There is a famous story circulated among members of the Muhammadiyah and favorably reiterated by its preachers and writers, concerning the way Dahlan taught his students the *sūrat* al-Mā'ūn of the Qur'ān (107:1-7).[162] Strictly upholding his unique approach in teaching the Qur'ān, it is reported that he kept explaining *sūrat* al-Mā'ūn over and again for a very long period, despite the growing boredom and resentment of his students. Finally, one of his students, H. Syuja' by name, grew frustrated and asked him why he did not move to the next lesson. In his response Dahlan asked him, "Do you really understand the passage?" H. Syuja' answered that he and his friends had understood the passage very well and had memorized it. Hence Dahlan asked further, "Did you realize it (*mengamalkannya*)?" "What

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[161] See K.R.H. Hadjid, *Adjaran K.H.A. Dahlan dengan 17 Kelompok Ajat2 al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Jajasan Dana Bantuan Tjalon Hadji Indonesia, n.d.). Unfortunately, those seventeen groups of Qur'anic verses taught by Dahlan are not classified under definite subjects. Some groups are named under a particular heading, such as cleansing oneself [from moral vices] (25:43; 87:13), against greed and excessive love of wealth (89: 16-23), those who deny religious truth (107:1-4), the meaning of religion (30:30), good deeds (18:110, 39:2, 33:21), religious belief (9:45, 29:2) and Islam and socialism (9:34, 3:186, 8:28). Others are merely named under certain words found in the verses given, such as *wa-tawāṣaw bi'l-ḥaqq* (10:107, 18:29, 47:3, 6: 115), *watawāṣaw bi'l-ṣabr* (2:214), and *wa-ana min al-muslimīn* (6:162, 3:84, 3:19, 3:67-68, 2:127). Still others are named under the name of the *sūrah* and the number of the verses, such as al-Qāri'ah 6 (101:6, 7:7, 99:5, 4:40), al-Ṣaff 3 (61:3, 2:44), and al-Ḥadīd 16 (57:16, 8:30).

[162] The passage reads: "What! Hast thou seen him who belieth the Final Judgement, that is he who repelleth the orphan, and urgeth not others to feed the poor. And woe unto those praying ones, who are heedless of their prayer, who do (a good deed only) to be seen, and also without alms." Dahlan, as reported by Hadjid, designated a specific approach to be followed by his students in learning the Qur'ān. Upon selecting a passage of the Qur'ān consisting of two or three verses as an object of his study, a student should begin with reading it carefully, followed by an examination of its meaning, understanding its interpretation, and discovering its goals. When he finds a prohibition in that passage, he should ask himself whether or not he has evaded it; and if he finds an ordainment, he should ask himself whether or not he has fulfilled it. Consequently, if he did not fulfill these steps completely, he may not proceed to take another passage to study. Ibid., p. 21. See also Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Warisan Intelektual K. H. Ahmad Dahlan dan Amal Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1990), p. 65.

should we realize?" replied H. Syujaʿ, "Didn't we recite this *sūrah* many times in our prayers?" Dahlan then explained that "realization" (*mengamalkan*) not only meant memorization and recitation, but, more importantly, it needed to be "put into practice" or "implemented' in daily life. "Therefore," suggested Dahlan, "from this time on, everyone of you should go around the town to seek out orphans and poor children. As soon as you find them, bring them back to your homes, give them soap to wash, offer them good clothes to dress, prepare good food for them to eat, and give them a good place to stay. So we stop class now, and go accomplish what I have told you."[163]

For Rais, the above exposition clearly illustrates how the methodology of Dahlan exemplifies the concept of social justice in practice. Rais refers to this as the implementation of "*Tauhid Sosial.*"[164] It is an obligation of every believer to realize such virtues, since failure to meet these obligations will endanger the very soul of a Muslim. For Rais *tawḥīd* requires social justice, since any form of human exploitation denies the essential equality of the human race before God. Therefore, the cleavage between the rich and the poor of society violates the essential truth of *tawḥīd*. He therefore suggests that members of the Muhammadiyah need to strengthen the *tauhid aqidah* (Ar. *tawḥīd al-ʿaqīdah*), or the firm belief in the oneness of God, by striving to realize the ideal of *Tauhid Sosial*. Although this is a universal truth, Rais is mainly concerned with the economic injustices and uneven power distribution that have plagued Indonesians in the past few decades. Business has created unhealthy economic competition, fully supported by the power holders. Monopoly, monopsony, and business conglomeration have flourished, disrespecting the principles of social justice. To support this argument, Rais refers to the fact that four percent of the citizens command seventy-five percent of the socio-economic resources, and ten percent of the conglomerates hold national assets equal to one third of the GDP (Gross Domestic Products). Likewise, the License for Auctioning Forest Concession (*Hak Pengusahaan Hutan*, HPH) is unjustly dominated by ten people

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[163] Khairuddin Bashori, "Keserakahan Ummat di Mata K.H.A. Dahlan," in Tim Pembina al-Islam dan Kemuhammadiyahan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, *Muhammadiyah: Sejarah, Pemikiran dan Amal Usaha* (Malang: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Publikasi Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, 1990), p. 32. See also A. Jainuri, "The Formation of the Muhammadiyah's Ideology," pp. 177-179.

[164] M. Amien Rais, *Visi dan Missi Muhammadiyah*, p. 43.

who maintain a monopoly over more than a half of the tropical forests in the country. All of these are clear manifestations of the economic injustices which have taken place for a long time in the country.[165]

Being deeply concerned with such realities, Rais directed his appeal to the Muhammadiyah that this reform movement be able to reformulate the social dimension of the *tawḥīd*. In congruence with the Qur'ānic injunction: "Verily, God enjoineth justice and benevolence (to others) and giving unto the kindred, and forbiddeth lewdness, and evil, and rebelion; He exhorteth you that ye may take heed" (16:90), he demanded that the Muhammadiyah devote itself to the abolition of social injustices. According to Rais, the Muhammadiyah has to concern itself with the issue of social justice in the spirit of "commanding goodness and prohibiting evil." This is the source of its creativity and dynamism, which has become a built-in apparatus of its character for very long time.[166]

Muhammadiyah members, according to Rais, must not restrict themselves to a narrow interpretation of the concept of *tawḥīd*. He reminds his fellow Muhammadiyah members that the notion of *tawḥīd* commonly upheld by Muslims deals with strictly spiritual matters only, which has no clear implications for worldly matters and is therefore sometimes misguided. Unfortunately, Muslim leaders are

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[165] M. Amien Rais, *Membangun Politik Adiluhung*, p. 95. Describing the business conglomeration in Indonesia by the end of Suharto's regime, a report indicates that there were 33 major business conglomerates in Indonesia which were controlled by overseas Chinese, and almost all of them were interlinked. Their interlinkages were established through cross-shareholdings and directorships, joint ventures between conglomerates and family links such as marriages between the major business families. The interlinkages turned potential competitors into colleagues, allowing the conglomerates to access new sources of capital and to maintain market shares. The management of political risk is one of the important results of the interlinkages. In the case of the Indonesian government turns unfavorable toward one member of the clustered groups, the interlinkages will exert influence so that the unfavorable currents will flow onto the other conglomerates outside their linkage. Consequently, each conglomerate has a vested interest in maintaining all the others' interests. Some conglomerates also had links to key members of the Suharto family, particularly to ex-President Suharto's sons and daughters through joint ventures. On the other hand, although well-connected *pribumi* or ethnic Indonesian politicians brought small amounts of equity to the joint ventures, they achieved a high proportion of the profits. Due to their skillful talent in negotiating bureaucratic and regulatory obstacles, they earned high returns on their "political capital." See, George T. Haley, Chin Tiong Tan and Usha V. Haley, *New Asian Emperors: The Overseas Chinese, Their Strategies and Competitive Advantages* (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1998), p. 60.

[166] M. Amien Rais, *Visi dan Missi Muhammadiyah*, p. 44.

not involved enough in matters directly relating to important moral issues. For instance, if they see a Muslim woman who is not properly dressed or leaves her head uncovered, their religious sentiments will be offended. Likewise, if they see a nightclub being allowed to operate in a nearby hotel, they will demand its closure, even violently. In actuality, however, their keen piety is silent in the face of obvious social injustices. To ameliorate this situation, Rais suggests that every Muslim should be generous with his wealth by donating a portion to improving the common well-being of the community members.[167] He also reminds his fellow Muslims not to be stingy, since the Prophet will be ashamed of them on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, according to his point of view, it would be better if the selfish disclaim themselves as members of the Prophet's community. But his principal point is that as true believers, Muslims must strive to end the suffering of the poor and the needy.[168]

The position of Rais is very similar to that of Kuntowijoyo, another leading figure in the Muhammadiyah. Kuntowijoyo is deeply concerned with creating a place in society for the Muhammadiyah in order to enhance its contribution to improving the current conditions of Muslims. He insists that up to the present, Muslims have made no serious attempt to formulate Islamic doctrines regarding current social, economic and political issues. So far, they only have reconsidered abstract moral values, but have failed to give proper attention to more practical matters. Ethical issues must be considered in the context of social meaning. In other words, social relationships should not be viewed separately from its normative values, but also from its functional context. Due to some common misperceptions,

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[167] Unfortunately, Rais does not propose a particular manifesto for action in addition to his only general description of the concept of social justice. Similarly, his solution to the problem of social injustices, as seen in the above exposition, is not fully developed. In Western literature, however, social justice has been a great issue since the turn of the nineteenth century. The most current discussion on the issue is offered by David Miller in his *Principles of Social Justice* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999). In this work, social justice is characterized as the animating ideal of democratic governments throughout the twentieth century. Even those who oppose it recognize its potency. However, the meaning of social justice remains obscure, and existing theories put forward by political philosophers to explain it have failed to capture the way people in general think about issues of social justice. Miller argues that principles of justice must be understood carefully, each principle finding its natural home in a different form of human association. Because modern societies are complex, the theory of justice must be complex, too.

[168] M. Amien Rais, *Tauhid Sosial*, p. 113.

Muslims, according to Kuntowijoyo, do not feel obligated to offer better living wages, decent work hours and proper social welfare benefits. As far as they are concerned, if a factory or workshop has a prayer house for its Muslim workers to perform their religious obligations they will feel they have fulfilled their responsibilities. In this sense, Kuntowijoyo asserts, Islam has had no instrumental effect in bettering the welfare of the workers, and therefore it is incumbent upon all Muslims to redefine their role to respond to contemporary issues.[169]

However, Rais admits that it is not easy to put the concept of *Tauhid Sosial* into practice. He refers to an example of how large business concerns have been deeply rooted in the country for the last thirty years. Interests have become entrenched and thus will need a long time to be undone. Yet this does not mean that the problem is beyond repair. He reminds his readers about Moses whose prophetic messages dominate the Qur'ānic stories about the prophets of God, because the moral teachings it conveys are universal. Moses' story in the Qur'ān also reveals the eternal confrontation between justice and injustice. While uprightness is represented by Moses, oppression and dictatorship are represented by Pharaoh. Pharaoh presumptuously claimed to be the personofication of the state or even identical with God, who with the power to govern over his subjects, believed to be able to determine their life or death. Therefore, he also declared that he or the state could be the only agent to provide people with their sustenance.[170] Nevertheless, in order to maintain his authority Pharaoh had to rely on the assistance of his elite technocrats or economists. In terms of technocracy, Pharaoh was supported by Hāmān who was requested to build a high tower for him to see if there was God in the heaven as Moses had described. In economic affairs, Pharaoh was supported by Qārūn, or Korah, the richest person of his age. Even the keys to his treasures were reported to have been too heavy for seven mighty persons to lift.[171] Through

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[169] Kuntowijoyo, "Peran Muhammadiyah dalam Masyarakat Modern," in Syukrianto A.R. and Abdul Munir Mulkhan (eds.), *Pergumulan Pemikiran dalam Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Sipress, 1990), p. 63. See also M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Umat Islam dan Pembaharuan Teologi," in Bosco Carvallo and Dasrizal (eds.), *Aspirasi Umat Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penunjang Pembangunan Nasional, 1983), pp. 129-130; Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development*, pp. 39-40.

[170] Rahardjo, "Umat Islam dan Pembaharuan Teologi," p. 125.

[171] Rais refers to the Qur'ānic account: "And said Pharaoh: Oh Haman! Build

this metaphorical story in the Qur'ān, Rais suggests that improving social justice is not an easy task. Therefore, Muslims have to be determined to actualize it, since it is a long term struggle, like that undertaken by Moses against the tyrannical rule of Pharaoh in the ancient Egypt.[172]

Rais is also critical of the fact that although Indonesia claims to uphold economic principles based on the moral ideals of the Pancasila, in reality, the social justice aspect of this doctrine is not respected. The social injustices that dominate daily life testify to this betrayal. Rais emphasizes that maintaining social justice is an imperative obligation upon Muslims based on the Qur'ānic injunction cited previously (16:90). There will be dire consequences if Muslims are unwilling to fulfill this Qur'ānic ordainment. If Muslims do not support social justice in concrete terms, Islam will lose its practical relevance. Rais further emphasizes this point by illustrating a similar example from the Catholic world. Due to its growing lack of relevance to the people's demands, the Catholic Church, according to Rais, was forced to formulate Liberation Theology. He further maintains that the emergence of Liberation Theology in Latin America was due to great economic and social cleavages. Initially, the Church failed to respond correctly, and thus the Church has lost its connection with current social realities.[173] In order to defend

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thou for me a tower that I may reach the means of access, the means of access unto heavens, so that I (may) mount up to reach unto God of Moses" (40:36-37) to describe Haman; and "Now Korah was of Moses' folk, but he oppressed them, and We gave him so much treasure that the stores thereof would verily have been a burden for a troop of mighty men" (28:76) to describe Korah.

[172] It is not clear whether or not Rais' statement is meant to imply that Suharto's reign was similar to that of the Qur'ānic Pharaoh's. Nevertheless, Rais was very critical of Suharto's policy in political and economic affairs, especially during his last two terms of presidency. However, Rais insisted that his critical stance was not intended to demean any body's dignity, but to censure the system which he considered to have engendered the freezing of democracy in the country. For Rais' critical views of Suharto's regime, see his *Membangun Politik Adiluhung*, pp. 299-418. See also "Mohammad Amien Rais: 'Koalisi Megawati dan Saya Lebih Realistis'," an interview by *Tempo*, vol. 27, no. 14 (5-11 January 1999), pp. 26-31.

[173] Liberation Theology, which began to emerge in Latin America in the 1960s, is essentially an attempt to reconceptualize the Christian faith from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed. However, Liberation Theology is not only a set of theological ideas or beliefs. It is more as a movement which tries to mobilize a previously unmobilized constituency for collective actions for social change. Moreover, Liberation Theology also attempts to reflect the experience and meaning of faith based on the commitment to abolish injustices and to build a new society. Thus it must be verified by the practice of that commitment, i.e. by taking an active part in

Islam against such a fate, Rais suggests that the Islamic principal teachings should be interpreted in such a way that they would be more applicable to the concrete problems of social life. Otherwise, Islam will lose its social significance. Currently, Islam is only perceived as containing unintelligible and impratical theological formulas, since it cannot be brought "down to earth." Rais fears that Islam may be threatened if the social dimension of *tawḥīd* in the form of *Tauhid Sosial* is not fulfilled.[174]

However, Rais does not agree with the attempts offered by other Muslim scholars, such as Hasan Hanafi of Egypt, who tried to introduce the concept of an Islamic Left (*al-yasār al-Islāmī*).[175] Rais argues

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the struggle for the exploited class against their oppressors. See Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 25-26. However, Rais, in the above statement, may have referred to the fact that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965), which marked a major attempt to rethink the nature of Church, the world, and the proper relation between the two, failed to understand the different sociopolitical realities in Europe and that in Latin America. It means that the document ignored the fact that the *world* of Latin America was different from that of Europe, since the former was a world of under-development, poverty and oppression. On the other hand, the Council did not anticipate some outgrowths of political problems in West Europe, where liberal democracy with mild socialist inclinations would not dispute the Church's participation in social and political spheres. See, Manzar Foroohar, *The Catholic Church and Social Change in Nicaragua* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), pp. 47-48. Although Rais does not agree that Muslims should adopt Liberation Theology, there have been some scholars who have tried to introduce it to Muslim readers. See, for instance, Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam and Liberation Theology: Essays on Liberative Elements in Islam* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990), and Farid Esack, *Qur'ān, Liberation & Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997). More strikingly, although Hasan Hanafi, a contemporary Egyptian thinker, does not devote a special book to this issue, he claims that Liberation Theology is a common ground between all religions and is a means of liberating all people in order to implement the kingdom of Heaven on earth, the rule of justice, equality, and human dignity. He also insists that Liberation Theology is not a sectarian option, and thus it should not be ascribed to certain religions only. It is not a Liberation Theology of religions but a liberation theology of peoples. See his *Islam in the Modern World* (Cairo: The Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop, 1995), vol. 2, p. 189.

[174] M. Amien Rais, *Tauhid Sosial*, p. 117.

[175] The Islamic Left is a movement launched by Hasan Hanafi in the early 1980s. In this movement, Hanafi claims himself to be the bearer of the torch to lead the Arab people unto a new age of Enlightenment with an emphasis on rationalism, but without ignoring human feeling. Through this movement too, Hanafi considers himself the spearhead of a new Islamic Left aimed at improving the life of the oppressed Arab people by encouraging them to regain their identity and rid themselves of all that restrains their progress. He also seeks to reinvigorate their spirits, to achieve better standards of living and to realize self-determination, by developing a new Islamic theology of man. With his claim to be a philosopher with a new hermeneutic

that promoting such a concept will only cause further difficulty, since, by accepting this idea, Muslims must also consider that other "brands" of Islam are justifiable; such as Islamic Right, Islamic Marxist, Islamic Mao, and Islamic Castro. Ascribing such alien attributes to Islam will only cause confusion and blur one's understanding of the true nature of Islam, and thus it will be fruitless. Muslims only need to interpret Islamic doctrines in accordance with contemporary issues, so that it will be able to give correct response to them.[176]

Rais' refusal to accept the ideas of the Islamic Left is understandable since he aspires to promote his own formula of social justice in the *Tauhid Sosial*. His insistence that a religious belief will lose its actual relevance whenever it fails to sustain its position as a defender of the interests of the poors and of general welfare is also a clear indication of his similar concerns; one that is maintained by both movements. Therefore, in spite of his refusal to adopt the idea of

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that combines an innovative understanding of Islam, Marxism and phenomenology, he tried to create a revolutionary ideology that gives people a theory of actions leading to change, progress and fulfilment based on revelation. See Issa J. Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 44-45. For further discussion of Islamic Left, see Hasan Hanafi, *al-Dīn wa'l-Thawrah fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Madbūlī, 1988-1989), vol. 8; Idem, "Mādhā Yaʿnī: al-Yasār al-Islāmī?" in *al-Yasār al-Islāmī: Kitābāt fī al-Nahḍat al-Islāmīyah*, vol. 1 (1981), pp. 5-48; Kazuo Shimogaki, *Between Modernity and Post-Modernity: The Islamic Left and Dr. Hasan Hanafi's Thought, A Critical Reading* (Niigata, Japan: Chuto Kenkyujo, 1988). See also, Issa J. Boullata, "Ḥasan Ḥanafī," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 2, pp. 97-99.

[176] The issue might be different, for instance, if one considers that the label "Islamic Left" is used as an analytical device or method to examine the problem of social injustices generally maintained by the *status quo*. It is in this particular notion that Islamic Left was employed by ʿAli Shariʿati to formulate his ideological opposition against the tyrannical Shah of Iran, which culminated in the Iranian revolution of 1979. On the other hand, although Islamic doctrine strongly emphasizes on social justice and equality, as well as that the wealth should not be exclusively circulated among the rich, this doctrine is merely strong in terms of rhetoric. In practice, however, when Muslim world fell under the hegemony of Western capitalism, they could not find any distinctive method to articulate Islamic doctrine in an attempt to oppose it. It is in this context that some Muslim scholars like Hassan Hanafi and ʿAli Shariʿati found Marxism as an instrumental means of analysis to reformulate Islamic doctrine of social justice. It is in their hands too that Marxism—as a method of analysis—is being "Islamized," by which Islamic Left is directed at achieving social transformation. While they could not find such a method of analysis from Islamic tradition, Marxism is seen as an alternative to criticize Western capitalism. See, Komaruddin Hidayat, "Kiri Islam Mengedepankan Semangat Transformatif," an interview by the *Kompas* Daily Newspaper, 15 April 2000, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com/0004/15/nasional/kiri07.htm, [accessed 15 April 2000].

Islamic Left or Liberation Theology, in reality Rais aims to achieve the same goals. Yet compared to the notion of Hasan Hanafi's Islamic Left, Rais' idea of *Tauhid Sosial* seems to be more concerned with doctrinal matters rather than with creating a more theoretical framework. Unlike the Islamic Left of Hasan Hanafi, the *Tauhid Sosial* is not a reaction to Marxism, Socialism, Liberalism or the penetration of Western civilization. The *Tauhid Sosial*, as an attempt to reformulate the concept of *tawḥīd* in the Indonesian Islamic context, can be considered a reflection of Rais' attempt to liberate Indonesian Muslims from the unjust treatment caused by the Suharto regime's after-effects of economic and political marginalization.

Although Hanafi also establishes his movement on the principle of *tawḥīd* as a means to revive Islamic civilization, he advocates a revolutionary approach in his efforts to actualize his ideals. This is because the Islamic Left was largely inspired by the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979. Hanafi considers it to be another exemplary revolution following that of the French and the Bolsheviks in Russia.[177] Therefore, among the outstanding characteristics of the Islamic Left is its tendency to revolution and radicalism. This tendency is clearly manifested in some of his works, such as *Min al-ʿAqīdah ilā al-Thawrah: Muḥāwalat li-Iʿādat Binā' Uṣūl al-Dīn* (From Doctrine to Revolution: An Attempt to Rebuild the Science of Religious Funda-mentals).[178] This is completely unlike Rais who avoids the revolutionary approach. His critiques of authority claim to be disinterested analyses, far from any political agenda. Rais engages in what he calls "high politics," in

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[177] Hasan Hanafi, "Mādhā Yaʿnī," pp. 10-11.

[178] See Hasan Hanafi, *Min al-ʿAqīdah ilā al-Thawrah: Muḥāwalat li-Iʿādat Binā' Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Madbūlī, 1988), 5 vols. This work is considered the greatest achievement of Hanafi. In this work, Hanafi tries to re-examine the classical *kalām* texts so as to agree with the revolutionary political circumstances through which Muslims could rediscover their true identity. The theological reexamination in these volumes reflects Hanafi's general inclination toward Muʿtazilism. Each of these five volumes discusses different theme as shown by the subtitle of the book: (1) Theoretical introduction, which reminds us of the first paragraphs of al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Kitāb al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah*; (2) Divine unicity (*al-tawhīd*), on the being of God and His attributes; (3) Divine justive (*al-ʿadl*), on the ethical condition of moral acts and the will to commit them; (4) Prophethood (*al-Nubuwwah*), on the development of revelatory inspiration and the human need of this office; and (5) Faith, work and the imamate, on the relation of belief and unbelief to ethical acts, especially those relating to political actions. See, Richard C. Martin and Mark Woodward with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Muʿtazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld: 1997), pp.213-214.

which ethics and morality are to be taken as his governing principles. He argues that Indonesian people are a "soft nation," and so that they do not like to take revolutionary actions, like that undertaken in Iran. Rais also insists that radical thought is indispensable. Radical action, however, is not justifiable. "If we do not think radically," argues Rais, "and we just think superficially, we will not be able to touch the real problem, or we will get into self-deception." Based on the above consideration, Rais, like his contemporary scholars, emphasizes the necessity of fostering social transformation, by eliminating all elements of social injustices prevalent in the country.[179]

As has been discussed earlier, Rais admits that to promote social justice through the idea of *Tauhid Sosial* is not an easy task and requires a long term commitment by the people. However, the idea of *Tauhid Sosial* should not be directly offered to a general audience of *pengajian*, or as popular religious lecture. Rais argues that this concept is far too abstract for common people to understand, and thus they will reject it. Therefore, it should be first introduced to limited groups among the learned people in university campuses or in certain youth trainings of selected members. In turn, according to Rais, they will be able to translate this idea into actions for the benefit of the common people. Rais bases his argument on the fact that social transformations usually begin with an intellectual transformation. Moreover, the community will only be set in motion when there is an illuminating idea which inspires actions.[180]

Based on all of the above considerations, Rais asserts that Muslims are obliged to strive for better social conditions through the promotion of *Tauhid Sosial*. Without undertaking this program, there will be great risks, such as:[181]

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[179] M. Amien Rais, *Membangun Politik Adiluhung*, p. 96. "Social transformation" has reemerged as another popular catchword discussed by Muslim scholars since the early 1990s. Moeslim Abdurrahman, for instance, has marked this trend by his work *Islam Transformatif* (1995). The work is meant as to offer some critical concepts of theology as an approach to redefining the relation between religion, state, modernity and social justice. Abdurrahman also maintains that religion should not be taken as merely a sign of a group identity, but it must guide to liberate people from any form of servitude and oppression. This is because religion, besides its function as a source of legitimacy, also encourages social change by correcting or criticizing any deviation from an ideal concept of truth and justice. See Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Transformatif* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995), especially pp. 301-308. See also Bisri Effendy, "Transformasi Umat di Tengah Ajaran Agama Baku," *Prisma*, vol. 20, no. 3 (March 1991), pp. 65-68.

[180] M. Amien Rais, *Tauhid Sosial*, pp. 117-118.

[181] Ibid, pp. 118-119.

1. Islam will experience a crisis of relevance. When people are searching for solution for their social inequity, they will not find any guidance or direction from Islam, and thus they will try to find it elsewhere.

2. Non-Islamic ideology or even anti-Islamic ideology will arise among Muslims. It will attract much of their attention, because it will offer a great deal of promise, like Marxism and Leninism.

3. If Muslims are not aware of the *Tauhid Sosial*, they unintentionally promote secularism. This is because Muslims themselves fail to make their religion relevant outside the mosques. Islam then becomes a religion of pure spirituality, with no relationship to social problems. The people then will leave religion for secularism. In addition, people will adopt a dichotomous way of thinking in that spiritual matters will belong to religion, and social problems will belong to community.

For Rais, the Muhammadiyah indeed has many appropriate doctrinal solutions to social problems. The concept of *Tauhid Sosial* is one of these doctrinal solutions, which can be implemented through promoting the following steps:[182]

1. Enlighten the *ummah* through schools and other educational institutions. To support this idea, the Muhammadiyah proposes that religious donations in the forms of *zakāh, infāq* and *ṣadaqah* are not to be contributed to mosques only, but also to educational institutions. Rais argues that people who gathered in mosques will not be enlightened and that their social level will not be elevated unless they are freed from the shackles of ignorance. Education, as maintained by the Muhammadiyah, has been an instrumental means to transform Muslims from the "quantitative majority" to "qualitative majority."

2. Enhance charity and benevolence. The establishment of the Muhammadiyah as a socio-religious organization is intended to act as a means to encourage people to take part in benevolent activities in a collective way. Although Muslims were accustomed to undertaking such endeavors before, charity was undertaken individually and based on personal initiative. But after the establishment of the Muhammadiyah, the spirit of promoting benevolence and charity is fostered through an institutional organization. Through such an organization, Indonesian Muslims could make some significant leaps in promoting

[182] M. Amien Rais, *Visi dan Missi Muhammadiyah*, pp. 44-49.

good works (both in quality and quantity). The Muhammadiyah, as an organization, has already established hundreds of schools, hospitals, orphanages or poor houses. All of these endeavors, according to Rais, reflect the work-ethos maintained by the organization. This has been clearly expressed in popular sayings, such as "less talk, more works," "hard-working," "the time-value respecting," and "high discipline."

3. Cooperate to achieve all virtues. The Muhammadiyah has based its doctrine of struggle on the Qur'ānic injunction: "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour" (5:2). As an organization designed for preaching Islam and summoning people to promote virtue and prohibit evil, the Muhammadiyah invites all elements of the *ummah* to work together to achieve common well-being.

4. In order to achieve its goal to establish a perfect society with the favor of God, the Muhammadiyah avoids political involvement. It has been decided that the organization is not a political association, and thus it will avoid all political activities. Although it still acknowledges that the "struggle for power" through politics will be essential to the mission of the organization, the Muhammadiyah claims that its primary duty is to reconstruct infrastructure. Thus, it does not like to take short cuts through politics in achieving its goals. It has its own approach by implanting Islamic values through which the Muhammadiyah will prepare qualified human resources having noble character and upholding all moral norms. In this way, when those people eventually involve themselves in political activities, they will not become *homo politicus*, and pursue authority for the sake of authority itself. In other words, in Rais' point of view, they will be able to reject the process of political "de-humanization" and perceive political power as a trust to reinforce the common well being. The success of the Muhammadiyah in maintaining its integrity as a reform movement is due to its consistency in avoiding involvement in politics. Whenever political considerations intercede in non-political organizations, the latter will be prone to disintegration. And so far, the Muhammadiyah has succeeded in preventing such a thing from happening to it.

In addition to his vigorous campaign for his concept of *Tauhid Sosial*, Rais is also deeply concerned with the general trend of moral laxity he sees in daily life. It has been widely known that at least during the last three decades of the twentieth century Indonesia was

overwhelmed by malpractices in many fields of social, political and economic lives. Corruption, bribery, collusion, nepotism and power abuse were commonly observed in almost all levels of public service, including educational institutions. To remedy these predicaments, first of all, Rais summons his fellow Muslims to uphold strict morality (*akhlāq*), since it is only strict morality that will make clear cuts between the lawful and unlawful (*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*), as well as between good and evil. He insists that insofar as the bureaucrats, businessmen, intellectuals and community leaders rigorously uphold morality as their "commander," these malpractices will be considerably reduced. On the contrary, when the definition of *ḥalāl* and *ḥaram* is made unclear or blurred, all rules and order will further deteriorate. Rais admits that his appeal to make morality a "commander" sounds very normative. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that the national development programs, a common political jargon during the Suharto's era, must be firmly established on a clear and strictly normative value.[183]

Unfortunately, Rais' discussion of the necessity of upholding strict morality to reduce the influence of overwhelming malpractices in social, political and economic affairs is too short to be exhaustive. In theory, however, to make this strict morality an ordinance requires a firm theological basis, and that would be offered by a rational theology with its rigorous moral framework.[184] Soft morality and permissive stances commonly associated with Sunnī-Ashʿarite theology have been easily abused to tolerate forms of political and economic malpractices. Soft morality also does little to stimulate personal discipline, which is the most urgent condition necessary for sustaining development programs. In the past, rigorous morality has been exemplified by Muʿtazilite theologians such as al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (935-1025). ʿAbd al-Jabbār was reported to have refused to pray for the funeral ceremony of Ṣāḥib b. ʿAbbād (938-995), the Buyid vizier who had been his patron and assigned him to the

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[183] M. Amien Rais, "Panglima" *Republika Online* (14 March 1996), as quoted from http://www.rad.net. id/republika/9603/14. This short essay is reprinted in *Refleksi Amien Rais dari Persoalan Semut sampai Gajah*, ed. by Taufiq Alimi (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997), pp. 86-88.

[184] For further discussion on this issue, see, among the others, George F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of ʿAbd al-Jabbār* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); idem, "Divine Justice and Human Reason in Muʿtazilite Ethical Theology," in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Ethics in Islam* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), pp. 73-83.

elevated position as *qāḍī al-quḍāt* (the chief judge), on the grounds that Ibn ʿAbbād did not repent for his grave sins. ʿAbd al-Jabbār's harsh decision was believed to have been established on his strong attachment to one of the Muʿtazilite principles that the grave sinner would remain eternally in Hell, if he did not repent. In his refusal to pray for Ibn ʿAbbād, ʿAbd al-Jabbār was reported to have said: "I do not ask God to have mercy upon him, because he did not show his repentance."[185]

This is in contrast to Sunnī theology which is very loose and lenient toward moral transgressions. Due to this leniency, some Sunnī scholars took an extreme stance to counter it by developing Sufism, which is an antithesis of the tendency toward moral laxity. Its growth in the Middle Ages was therefore believed as an alternative undertaken by those who were deeply offended by moral infringements and the extravagant courtly life of those in power. Since these scholars could do nothing to prevent the growth of moral corruption, they

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[185] In Arabic the saying reads "*anā lā ataraḥḥam ʿalayhi li-'annahu lam yuẓhir tawbatahu*." See, Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Kītāb Irshād al-Arīb ilā Maʿrifat al-Adīb or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*, edited by D.S. Margoliouth (London: Luzac, 1925), vol. 2, p. 335. However, exactly why ʿAbd al-Jabbār took this harsh decision, in spite of Ibn ʿAbbād's kindness to him during his lifetime, remains debatable. In addition to the above account that it was due to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's strict attachment to the Muʿtazilite principle, it was also reported that on the death of Ibn ʿAbbād, the Buyid *amīr* appointed new viziers, Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ḍabī and Abū ʿAlī b. Ḥamūlah, to replace the late Ibn ʿAbbād. The *amīr* then told them that Ibn ʿAbbād had wasted the wealth of the state and neglected his obligation to maintain the rights of his subjects. Thus it was compulsory to make up the loss by confiscating his wealth and property. It was also decided to invalidate all the appointments given by him to his companions and dependents, including ʿAbd al-Jabbār. See, Z{ahīr al-Dīn al-Rudhrāwarī, *Dhayl Kītāb Tajārub al-Umam*, edited by H.F. Amedroze (Baghdad: al-Muthannā, 1919), vol. 3, p. 262. Yet, Miskawayh, the historian contemporary to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, reported that the reason for the *amīr* to confiscate Ibn ʿAbbād's wealth after his death was actually in order to replenish the former's own bankrupt coffers. The *amīr* even went further and sold the vizierate tenure to both al-Ḍabī and Ibn Ḥamūlah, who had been enemies to each other. See Abū ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, *The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate: Original Chronicles of the Fourth Islamic Century*, tranlated by A.H. Amedroze and D.S. Margoliouth (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921), vol. 4, pp. 279-280. Nevertheless, ʿAbd al-Jabbār was himself blamed as unrespectful (*qalīl al-riʿāyah*) and was officially condemned as ungrateful for that judgement. See also Judith K. Hecker, "Reason and Responsibility: An Explanatory Translation of *Kītāb al-Tawlīd* from *al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa'l-ʿAdl* by Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhāni, with Introduction and Notes" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California Berkley, 1975), especially in her Introductory notes; Fauzan Saleh, "The Problem of Evil in Islamic Theology: A Study on the Concept of *al-Qabīḥ* in al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī's Thought (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1992), pp. 13-15.

turned to "entertine" themselves by founding their own solitary world of Sufism, detached from impure public life. Beyond their world, however, in the caliphal court and public life, moral abuse, corruption and other social delinquencies grew unchecked. The Sufis, although they were deeply exasperated with that impure life, had no access to intervene, and could do nothing to remedy that impurity. It was only the "accommodationist" *ʿulamāʾ* who could intervene in impure courtly life. But they did so only to seek legitimacy from power holders by developing the so-called "popular" theology that is compliant in tolerating any form of moral laxity. In due course, they did not refuse to accept anybody as a Muslim in spite of his moral laxity and his negligence in religious doctrine.[186]

On the other hand, the power holders were also aroused to obtain theological justification from those accommodating *ʿulamāʾ* so that all measures they undertook to seize suzerainty was said to be divinely approved. Even Ibn Taymīyah himself was reported to have been "obliged" to acknowledge the veracity of a saying allegedly attributed to the Prophet that "Sixty years with an unjust *imām* (leader) is better than a night without a sultan."[187] Therefore, to uphold morality as a commander requires the foundation of a rational theology, and not a soft or permissive one. Furthermore, the need to turn to rational theology has been so urgent especially to support the emergence of the Muslim middle class in the country, whose existence is very instrumental for supporting the growth of democratization. Through the empowerment of this Muslim middle class, so it is hoped, corruption could be eradicated and the system, in terms of political, economic and social orders, could be ameliorated.

Rais has been deeply concerned with the social injustices, moral abuses and political malpractices prevalent in his country. To remedy these predicaments Rais insists that Muslims should re-evaluate their understanding of the concept of *tawḥīd*. The *tawḥīd*, or belief in the oneness of God, should not be manifested in individual piety only, but more importantly, in Muslim social life as well. A true belief in the oneness of God must be instrumental in reinforcing social justice.

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[186] For another critical insight on the development of Sufi tradition, see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York and Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 129-130.

[187] Ibn Taymīyah, *al-Siyāsat al-Sharʿīyah fī Islāḥal-Rāʿī wa'l-Raʿīyah*,ed. by Muḥammad al-Mubārak (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1966), p. 139.

However, individual piety would be meaningless and social justice could not be uplifted if Muslims only adhere to weak theology. Such theology, with its permissive stance toward moral laxity, should be circumscribed. It is the time for Indonesian Muslims to turn to rational theology that obligates them to maintain strict morality, in which the boundaries between the lawful and unlawful are made clear and distinct.

To sum up, this chapter has discussed how the reformists have reconstructed Islamic theological discourse throughout the twentieth century. This reconstruction is begun with an assessment of the principal beliefs in the *Kītāb al-Īmān* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, which signifies that the theological doctrine upheld by the Muhammadiyah is established on an authoritative foundation. In turn, this is also to suggest that the Muhammadiyah is theologically an upholder of the Sunnite doctrine, and thus it belongs to the orthodox Muslim group. The *Kītāb al-Īmān*, therefore, serves as the essential framework for other attempts to develop a theological discourse among Muhammadiyah scholars. The first attempt to develop this theological discourse was made by K.H. Mas Mansoer, with his emphasis on purifying Muslim belief from elements of polytheism and superstition. The same attempt has been made by A. Hassan of Persatuan Islam. Hassan, however, does not deal only with purifying belief, but also with a more general foundation of faith, including the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar*. Hamka is another Muhammadiyah scholar whose work marks a more important shift in the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. He began to introduce a radical theological outlook by adopting a rational interpretation of the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar*. He insisted that the negative influence of fatalistic doctrine and the deprivation of the spirit of free will had brought Indonesian Muslims into lethargy and backwardness. The fatalistic verses of the Qur'ān should not give license to Muslims to be submissive or to behave childishly under the alleged protection of God. Muslims, Hamka suggests, must be responsible for improving their own worldly well-being, since God will never change the fate of people unless they are willing to change it themselves (13:11).

The attempt to reinterpret the theological foundation for the Muhammadiyah is continuously made by its scholars until the recent time. This is apparent among contemporary scholars associated with this reform movement, such as M. Amien Rais and his fellows. Unlike the previous scholars, Rais, though still concerned with the issue of

principal belief, tries to offer a broader perspective by applying a modern scientific approach in interpreting the universal message of Islam. His idea of *Tauhid Sosial* is just an example of how he attempts to bring this doctrinal belief into more practical and empirical spheres so that it may, in turn, improve the condition of social justice. It is through the works of Rais and his contemporaries that the Muhammadiyah unceasingly expresses its active involvement in seeking the doctrinal relevance of Islam in responding day-to-day issues faced by Indonesian Muslims.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CURRENT ISLAMIC THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE: MU'TAZILISM AND NEO-MODERNISM

Islamic thought in Indonesia during the last quarter of the twentieth century has flourished and become significantly enriched, both in terms of themes and approaches. At the foundation of this growth was the emergence of independent and liberal thinkers who were not committed to political parties or mass-religious organizations, such as the Muhammadiyah or NU. They distanced themselves from mass parties in favor of a new strategy of Islamic revitalization.[1] Their advent since the 1970s was an indirect counterbalance to the way of thinking posed by the existing religious organizations or associations. When they first appeared, many were doubtful that this type of thought would gain support or appreciation. But by the mid-1980s, this model of individual thinking grew more attractive, especially to young educated Muslims. It offered them a new way of understanding Islam, and thus gave an indirect support to the idea of pluralism. However, there are other factors supporting this growth, including the publication of the works of world-caliber Muslim scholars in Indonesian language,[2] and the opportunity for young Muslims to pursue further education in Western universities. In this chapter, I will discuss this growth and development from a theological perspective, by examining the works of Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid.

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[1] Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class." *Indonesia*, no. 56 (1993), p. 5.

[2] Azyumardi Azra, for instance, mentions that in the last two decades of the last century, Islamic publications in Indonesia have flourished impressively. Since then, books on Islam have flooded markets, overshadowing those on other subjects. A great enthusiasm of both readers and publishers on Islamic issues, in addition to difficulty in finding the original works written by Indonesian *'ulamā'* and scholars, has encouraged the publishers to draw their attention to the works of foreign scholars to be translated into Indonesian. For further discussion on this issue, see Azyumardi Azra, "Perbukuan Islam dan Intelektualisme Baru," in Aswab Mahasin (ed.), *Ruh Islam dan Budaya Bangsa: Agama dan Problema Masa Kini* (Jakarta: Yayasan Festival Istiqlal, 1996), pp. 274-285.

A. Harun Nasution: Toward Islamic Rationalism

The most notable among those independent scholars who are not associated with mass-religious organizations was Harun Nasution (1919-1998).[3] Nasution's greatest contribution lies mainly in his attempts to introduce the rational theology of Muʿtazilism in a more comprehensive manner. Before this, Muʿtazilism was largely understood as "a series of 'heresies' known only from polemics borrowed from South Asian and Middle Eastern sources."[4] The introduction of Muʿtazilism in such a view can be traced back at least until the sixteenth century, in a treatise attributed to Sunan Bonang, one of the ancient Javanese Muslim saints, *The Admonitions of Seh Bari*.[5]

Nevertheless, the tendency toward rational theology, as already noted in the preceding discussion, had been adopted by upholders of the reform movement prior to the appearance of Nasution on the Indonesian Islamic scene. Although the common feature of Muhammadiyah theology is its inclination toward conservatism and purification, some Muhammadiyah scholars are familiar enough with the ideas of Muʿtazilite *kalām* and Qadarite views. This tendency is reflected in the works of Djarnawi Hadikusuma, Hamka, and H.A. Malik Ahmad.[6] These scholars have tried to introduce Islam in a

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[3] For the biography of Harun Nasution, see Zaim Uchrowi and Ahmadie Thaha, "Menyeru Pemikiran Rasional Muʿtazilah," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Panitia Penerbitan Buku dan Seminar 70 Tahun Harun Nasution and Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), pp. 3-62; Saiful Muzani, "Reaktualisasi Teologi Muʿtazilah bagi Pembaharuan Umat Islam: Lebih Dekat dengan Harun Nasution." *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1993), Supplement, pp. 1-12. For an interesting examination of his intellectual biography, see Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Muʿtazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), pp. 160-168.

[4] Richard C. Martin, ibid., p. 140.

[5] Ibid., p. 139. For this work see *The Admonitions of Seh Bari: 16th Javanese Muslim Text Attributed to the Saint Bonan*, re-edited, translated with introduction by G.W.J. Drewes (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969). In This work, Muʿtazilism was associated with heresy. Once al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) was asked whether or not there was a time when God did not create. In his response, al-Ghazālī was reported to have said: "You are an infidel according to the four schools, because your doctrine detracts from the attributes of the Lord… [Y]ou are tainted by the heresy of the Muʿtazila." *The Admonitions*, p. 77, as quoted in Martin, ibid.

[6] In addition to a tendency toward rationality (discussed in the previous chapter) and, to a certain degree, an inclination toward Qadarīyah ideas as expressed by Hamka and A. Hassan, Martin mentions that Djarnawi Hadikusuma also discusses this issue, in his *Kitab Tauhid* (Yogyakarta: Persatuan, 1987 (first appeared 1964), especially pp. 62-66. In Martin, see *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, pp. 143-145.

more rational way, as a religion that encourages its adherents to achieve worldly progress, while freeing it from the unorthodox influences of local customs. Interestingly, although these scholars tried to adopt a rational theological outlook, they do not claim themselves to be upholders of a Qadarite worldview, let alone that of Muʿtazilism.[7]

When Nasution returned home to Indonesia after completing his Ph.D. program at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, in 1969, he was quite aware of his fellow Muslims' attitude toward Muʿtazilism. In an article written in the early 1970s, he states: "In Indonesia, Muʿtazili thought is not well known or appreciated, because … it is thought to be based on opinions which deviate from correct Islamic teachings."[8] But he felt that it was very urgent to give them some new insight to enhance the betterment of their worldview. Nasution's arrival in 1969 coincided with the emergence of the New Order under Suharto. With the new regime's insistence on economic growth and modernity, Muslims were challenged to show their concern with the development programs outlined by the new power holders. A question was frequently raised: "Is Islam compatible with the demand of progress and modernity?" In response to this inquiry, Nasution stated that insofar as Muslims maintained their belief in a fatalistic worldview, as based upon Ashʿarite doctrines, it is almost impossible to hope that they could participate in the process of developing the country. "[I]f Islamic societies are to come

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[7] Interview with Oman Fathurrahman, Secretary of the Majlis Tarjih of the Muhammadiyah Headquarter, Yogyakarta, 9 February 1999. Fathurrahman, however, does not deny that some individual members of the Muhammadiyah may adopt a certain doctrine of Muʿtazilism. Yet, as an institution, the Muhammadiyah will not turn itself to Muʿtazilism or adopt its doctrines. Another figure in the Majlis Tarjih, Syamsul Anwar, insists that although the Muhammadiyah upholds the doctrine of *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (enjoining good and prohibiting evil) as one of its central issues, it does not mean that the Muhammadiyah adheres to Muʿtazilism. *Al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf* has been widely known to Muslims as a general tenet prescribed by the Qurʾān, and thus it does not necessarily indicate one's adherence to Muʿtazilism. Moreover, regardless of the study made by Nasution concerning ʿAbduh's theological thought, Anwar insists that the Muhammadiyah is very much influenced by Muḥammad ʿAbduh. Interview with Syamsul Anwar, Vice-chairman of the Muhammadiyah Majlis Tarjih, Yogyakarta, 9 February 1999.

[8] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason*, p. 183; Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Harun Nasution* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), p. 129. The book by Nasution is a compilation of his articles delivered in some seminars or published in journals. However, there is no list of the resources from which those articles originated, and only some are clearly mentioned by date.

to terms with modernity it is essential that Ashʿari *kalam* be replaced with Muʿtazili."[9]

Nasution's insistence on this idea is clearly reflected in another article "Filsafat Hidup Rasional: Prasyarat bagi Mentalitas Pembangunan" (Rational Worldview as a Prerequisite for the Mentality of Progress, 1975). In this article Nasution emphasizes that a human is a rational being, as attested by several verses of the Qurʾān.[10] All of these indicate the necessity of reasoning to understand God's signs which lead to the truth. Nasution claims that the advance of Islamic civilization in the past resulted from the high appreciation of reasoning maintained by the early Muslims. They adopted all branches of science derived from many different sources: Greece, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and Persia. Because they were eager to be acquainted with all branches of science, they held a broader and more liberal worldview. Unfortunately, this liberal worldview was defeated by the traditional one, which granted reason less esteem.

It is important to note that in the traditional worldview, a human is considered to be weak and limited in power. Activism and dynamism were gradually replaced by passivity and a static attitude. They upheld that fate was unchangeable, and that every single movement or action was determined by the will of God, thus undermining the efficacy of the laws of nature. All of these developments led to the abandonment of the advancement of science and technology as symbols of modernity and progress. The notion of human responsibility was weakened and the individual's future was relinquished to the determination of fate and the flow of time. Since the development

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[9] Martin, ibid., p. 165. With regard to Indonesian Muslims' readiness to respond to progress, Nasution compared the result achieved by the reform movement that took place in Egypt and that in Indonesia. In Nasution's examination, these two reform movements were different due to the respective grounds on which their reform movements were established. The reform in Egypt, according to Nasution, was based on the precept of Qadariyah, while that in Indonesia was based on Ashʿarism with its traditional belief in *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, or God's predetermination. Accordingly, the reforms in Indonesia did not progress as far as those in Egypt, Turkey, and India-Pakistan. See Harun Nasution, ibid., pp. 154-155.

[10] Nasution, ibid., p. 140. To support this idea he mentions that in the Qurʾān the are no less than thirty verses signifying that human has to use his reasoning. The Qurʾānic phrases meant by Nasution in this context are *a-falā taʿqilūn* (do not you think?, 15 verses); *laʿallakum taʿqilūn* (hopefully you would be thoughtful, eight verses); *lā yaʿqilūn* (they are not thoughtful, seven verses); and *in kuntum taʿqilūn* (if you were thoughtful, two verses).

(*pembangunan*) promoted by the state was not directed only to the pursuit of physical goals but also to the establishment of spiritual well-being, it should be kept in mind that development must be directed to transform traditional attitudes to rational ones. In other words, the traditional worldview which is commonly held by today's Muslims should be replaced by a liberal perspective, like the one maintained by the early Muslim community.[11]

1. Nasution's Academic Stature and Theological Approach

Nasution commenced his academic enterprise in this particular intellectual environment, and thus his revolutionary measures were diametrically opposed to the general trends of that era. He tried to put an end to the old fashioned way of reasoning, in order to allow diverse modes of thought to flourish, and to encourage independent and individual discernment. He abrogated the supremacy of religious thought that had traditionally rested on the authority of certain public figures, like *kyahis* or *'ulamā'*. More strikingly, he was reported to have stated that religious knowledge should not be based only on revelation, but also on historical facts and cultural interpretation. In Nasution's point of view, Islam can be classified into doctrinal and non-doctrinal aspects. While the doctrinal aspects of Islam deal with fundamental beliefs and ritual obligations, the non-doctrinal aspects include all the products of historical Islam. However, the doctrinal aspects of Islam can be distinguished between the fundamental doctrines; that is the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, and non-fundamental; that is, the interpretation of those doctrines which led to the development of different schools of thought, or *madhhabs*. Therefore, interpretation cannot be seen as an absolute truth since it is bound to temporal limitations. As non-absolute truth, interpretation may be altered when the circumstances require it. It is in this subject matter that *taqlīd* (blind imitation) is forbidden.[12]

In order to see the position of Harun Nasution in today's Islamic academic life, Deliar Noer made an interesting comparison between Nasution and some Muslim leaders of the past, such as Dahlan, Hassan, Agus Salim, and Mohammad Natsir. These latter scholars were Muslim leaders associated with reform movements, either in

[11] Ibid., p. 146.

[12] Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1979), vol. 2, p. 113.

religious social movements or in Islamic political parties. They studied Islam in a different way from that undertaken by Nasution; either under the guidance of a tutor or through self-study on the basis of the demands of their community. Likewise, their awareness of the necessity of reform emerged after they had read some works of Muḥammad ʿAbduh. But compared to Nasution, none of these figures devoted any particular attention to Islam for purely academic reasons. This is mainly due to their involvement in the reform movements; their primary concern was to sustain the revivification of such movements. Purely academic inquiry into Islam was not known or did not become a real demand of Indonesian Muslims during this period. Nasution's main critic, H.M. Rasyidi, although he obtained his Ph.D. in Islamic mysticism from Sorbonne University, was not much different from the above scholars. Rasyidi remained an ardent supporter of the Muhammadiyah, and thus his approach to Islam was similar to those of the reformers.[13]

On the contrary, Nasution could free himself from the spirit of these movements, and therefore he focused his intellectual enterprises on academic life. He believed that certain things were necessary to be reinforced in the study of Islam, in ways that were different from what the reformers felt to be important. Nasution was basically more open to different points of view, allowing his audience the freedom to determine their own choice after following his exposition of the true facts of Islamic doctrine. Rasyidi, on the other hand, although he was open to different point of views, managed to give direction to his audience in determining their choices. His main concern was that after reading his works, his readers would be able to strengthen their belief. It does not mean that Nasution was not concerned with the necessity of strengthening his readers' belief. Nevertheless, he

[13] Deliar Noer, "Harun Nasution dalam Perkembangan Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, p. 92. This also deals with the different concepts of *daʿwah* (proselytization, or Islamic revitalization) held by both Nasution and the reformers. For Nasution, the target of the *daʿwah* should not be confined to the masses or common people as that maintained by the reformers. Thus, Nasution was more inclined to directing his object of *daʿwah* toward the elite. It is the elite and the power holders, Nasution argues, who are more necessary for the progress of the *ummah*. Muslims need the role of those elite with a genuine and a strong commitment to Islam to enhance their future progress. Accordingly, it is of vital importance to direct the *daʿwah* to the elite and public figures who have an effective power in outlining the general policy. See Saiful Muzani, "Reaktualisasi Teologi Muʿtazilah," p. 8.

was confident that after exposing his audiences objectively to what he felt to be the real facts of historical Islam, both its positive and negative developments, they would be able to determine their own choices. This is because Nasution was more trusting of the intellectual capacity of his readers to understand the truth. In other words, he believed that Muslims had grown more intelligent over time, and so would not be easily shocked by their exposure to different doctrinal ideas. Nasution asserts that Muslims will reach a fuller maturity by assuming true responsibility. Therefore, there was no problem in introducing those newly registered in undergraduate classes of the IAINs to all aspects of Islam, not only to its principal doctrines but also to its historical development and its diverse schools of thought. Nasution intentionally let his readers examine independently both the positive and negative aspects of historical Islam.[14] In contrast to Nasution's approach, Rasyidi was usually very cautious in explaining these historical aspects, due to his anxiety that the direct and overt approach would weaken one's belief. His anxiety was even made evident in his accusation of Nasution's approach of being influenced by the Orientalist perception of Islam. For Rasyidi, the Orientalists were not always sympathetic to Islam. Therefore, their earnest study of this religion would only frustrate or ruin it. Rasyidi was successful in voicing the objections of those who aspired to halt Nasution's measures.

Nasution's ideas to reinforce academic reform at the IAINs were substantially discussed in his two volume work, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* (Islam Viewed from Its Different Aspects, 1974). However, soon after its first publication, some objections were raised against Nasution's presentation and its approach. The publisher, Bulan Bintang, was very concerned with these strong objections. Rasyidi, one of those who expressed these objections, wrote a special report to the Minister of Religious Affairs, criticizing Nasution's work and reminding the religious authority of the dangers that the work might present.[15] However, this criticism was largely ignored, and

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[14] Ibid., p. 93.

[15] Rasyidi's criticism of Nasution's work was published in a book *Koreksi Terhadap Dr. Harun Nasution tentang "Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya"* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1977). In its preface, the publisher mentions the difficulty and annoyance it had countered after publishing Nasution's *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*. When Rasyidi's appeal to the Ministry of Religious Affairs got no response, he sent his criticism to Bulan Bintang to be published. "Through the publication of this [work]

Nasution remained persistent with his project. He even gained a considerable support from all of IAIN rectors at their meeting at Bandung in 1973, in which it was affirmed that Nasution's work was an essential textbook for the Introductory Course on Islamic Traditions that every IAIN student must take. Moreover, although Bulan Bintang refused to reprint the book, in spite of great demands, Nasution's work was widely disseminated since another publisher, Universitas Indonesia Press, undertook its subsequent publication.[16]

Through this work, Harun Nasution presents Islam in a broad perspective, encompassing many aspects. Islam is not only *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *tawḥīd* (belief in the oneness of God), *tafsīr* (Qurʾānic exegesis) and *akhlāq* (ethics). It must also include history, culture, philosophy, mysticism, theology, laws, institutions, and politics. However, he emphasizes that Islam remains one and unique. It was the *'ulamā'* who made it multifarious, because it is impossible for humans to understand the real nature (*hakekat,* Ar. *ḥaqīqah*) of Islam as precisely prescribed by God. The most humans can do is to examine it on the basis of the guidance revealed by God. As a textbook for an introductory course of Islamic traditions, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* is intended to examine Islamic traditions in an historical and sociological context. The work is also meant as a correction to an incomplete understanding of Islam. Therefore, although it discusses the fundamental aspects of Islam, the presentation is more comprehensive. Through this approach as well, students were not only exposed to doctrinal Islam but also to the correct method of understanding it; for example, by examining how a school of thought (*madhhab*) developed. Meanwhile, they were also requested to examine them critically and impartially. The students were invited not only to see Islam from a theological standpoint, but also from its social

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we hope that those who expressed their disagreement with Nasution's ideas would find some necessary explanations." See, pp. 5-6. Rasyidi, in his introduction to this work also mentions how his criticism came into publication. Initially he did not intend to publish the criticism. He began with a secret report to the Minister of Religious Affairs and his staff, noting the danger of Nasution's ideas on Islam, and with the hope that the Minister would take certain measures to prevent such dangers. But since the report did not receive enough consideration, Rasyidi decided to publish his secret report, hoping that the public would make a judgement toward these two different point of views, either his or Nasution's. See, pp. 13-14.

[16] Deliar Noer, "Harun Nasution dalam Perkembangan Pemikiran Islam," pp. 91-95.

and historical perspectives. Nasution took this approach in order to remove the *madhhab* fanaticism which was still very strongly maintained by some students. Adopting a certain *madhhab* uncritically and without understanding its historical and sociological contexts would only cause narrow-minded insight. Nasution was also deeply concerned with the necessity for students to be able to express their ideas freely, without being afraid of opposing other people's beliefs. In ways that are more extreme, he was reported to have stated that it was still possible for anybody to establish his own *madhhab* insofar as it had a strong foundation.[17]

Of course it is by no means certain that Nasution was serious with the above statement. The statement was merely meant as an encouragement for young Muslims to think radically and liberally about their religion, without being shackled by the *madhhab* formulation. On the other hand, Nasution wanted to perceive each school of thought objectively and impartially. He, therefore, maintained an inclusive stance, considering discrepancies of opinion as imprecise reasons to judge a group of people upholding different theological beliefs as infidels. This is reflected in his comprehensive analysis of Islamic theological schools, in his *Teologi Islam: Aliran-aliran, Sejarah, Analisa Perbandingan* (1986).[18] Unlike the works of other scholars prior to Nasution, this book is motivated by purely academic purposes with an adequate scholarly approach, without any interest in deciding which school of thought is the correct one. Thus, he discusses in turn the Khawārij, Murji'ah, Qadarīyah, Jabarīyah, Mu'tazilah and the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamā'ah as equally logical and legitimate doctrines. Nevertheless, Nasution was very concerned with the role of reason in human life, which occupies a place in almost all of his theological thought. It is in this regard that Nasution disagrees with

[17] Komaruddin Hidayat, "Sebagai Guru Sekaligus Orang Tua" in *Refleksi Pembaharuan*, pp. 291-295.

[18] Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-aliran, Sejarah, Analisa Perbandingan* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1986). This work, which will be discussed later, is the first book in Islamic theology written in Indonesian in a more scholarly approach. Before this, there was a similar work by Ahmad Hanafi, *Theology Islam (Ilmu Kalam)* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974). However, although Hanafi's work is also written with an academic approach and sounds impartial, it lacks a scholarly methodology. For instance, although it mentions some sources of reference (but still in a less academically appropriate), it does not use any notes. Almost similar to that of Hanafi is the work of K.H.M. Taib Thahir Abd. Mu'in, *Ilmu Kalam* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1981). Mu'in's work, which might have been the first textbook available for Islamic theology in the IAINs, is still academically very simple.

the idea that the Qurʾān regulates all the detailed aspects of human life, including economic, political, social and agricultural activities. Nasution argues that the Qurʾān encourages humans to employ their intellectual capacity. Therefore, if the Qurʾān determines all particular regulations of human activities, it would imply that there is no need for humans to exercise their intellects.[19] This stance, which sounds very radical to standard believers, indicates Nasution's persistence in maintaining rationality as a means to achieve progress.

To discuss Nasution's theological thought, we have to refer to his main works on this issue, *Teologi Islam* and *Muhammad ʿAbduh dan Teologi Rasional Muʿtazilah*. The primary contents of these works were originally some parts of his Ph.D. thesis on ʿAbduh's theological thought, written in 1968. *Teologi Islam* is divided into two parts: (1) The theological schools of thought and their historical backgrounds, which was based on his notes for lectures on Islamic theology given at the Jakarta IAIN; (2) Analysis and comparison, which was based on some parts of his thesis. The second work, which appeared about fifteen years after the first, deals with ʿAbduh's theological thought. Nasution, throughout this work, tries to analyze the main characteristics of ʿAbduh's theology by comparing it with that of the Muʿtazilites, Maturidites, and the Ashʿarites.

In his introduction to *Teologi Islam*, Nasution started with a brief definition of theology as a science that discusses the principal doctrines of a religion. Any person who would like to know his religion more thoroughly, needs to study theology. By studying theology, Nasution suggests, one will gain a firm foundation for one's belief, not easily shaken by any change over time. Like other writers on Islamic theology, Nasution also refers to the other Arabic terms used to identify this science, such as *uṣūl al-dīn, ʿaqāʾid, ʿilm al-tawḥīd,* and *ʿilm al-kalām*. According to his examination, the type of Islamic theology taught in the Indonesian Islamic educational system is largely of *ʿilm al-tawḥīd*, or the science for establishing the belief in God's unity. This *ʿilm al-tawḥīd,* however, is less profound and less philosophical in nature. In addition, this science usually discusses its subject from

[19] Nasution wrote a special article on this issue, entitled "Al-Qurʾan Mengandung Segala-galanya?" (The Qurʾān contains all things?), dated July 1976. As has been noted above, Nasution rejected this idea, and supported his argument with some ideas quoted from the classical exegetes, such as Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Masʿūd, and al-Zamakhsharī. For further discussion on this issue, see *Islam Rasional*, pp. 25-31.

one perspective only, without noting other schools of thought. The *ʿilm al-tawḥīd* taught in Indonesia is, according to Nasution, confined to the school of al-Ashʿarī. This further implies that Ashʿarism is the only acceptable doctrine of Islamic theology in Indonesia, and thus it gives an impression that Islam is narrow and restricted.[20]

It is necessary, therefore, to explore Islam more profoundly by scrutinizing some other aspects of its theological doctrines. Islamic theology, besides dealing with the question of divine nature, also discusses the problems of belief and unbelief (*īmān* and *kufr*), or who may be called Muslims and those who can be categorized as non-believers, having abandoned correct belief. Likewise, it examines the issue of Muslims who commit grave sins, and unbelievers who perform good deeds. Theology, after all, deals with the fundamental issues of religion, and not the "secondary" ones concerning practical doctrines, which in actuality, belong to the field of jurisprudence. Nasution insists that the discussion of fundamental religious principles will give Muslims a broader perspective than the discussion of particular ritual practices. Therefore, upholding a broader theological perspective will provide Muslims with a more inclusive worldview and a sensibility of tolerance.

Nasution's presentation in his *Teologi Islam* is more systematic and comprehensive compared to, by way of explanation, that of Hanafi and Muʿin. In the following discussion, I will focus on Nasution's examination of Muʿtazilism in comparison to the works of both Hanafi and Muʿin. The works of the latter writers were in use as theological textbooks for IAIN students prior to the arrival of Nasution.[21] This choice was made on the grounds that Nasution, through

[20] Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. x-xi (Introduction).

[21] A. (Ahmad) Hanafi's *Pengantar Theology Islam* first appeared in 1967, and Muʿin's *Ilmu Kalam* in 1966. Hanafi had another work, *Theology Islam (Ilmu Kalam)*. Although this latter work appeared in print in 1974, the work, according to its preface, was dated 1962. There is no further explanation about these different dates. It may imply that the work was already in circulation among the IAIN students in a stencil or hand printed form, which was very common in reproducing Islamic literature at the time. There is also no explanation concerning the two different works by the same author. The first, the *Pengantar*, which means "Introduction," logically should have appeared earlier than the second. It is of course confusing. The materials discussed in these two works also overlap or are repetitive. But while the first is divided into two parts (historical backgrounds of the development of Islamic theology and some schools of thought in Islamic theology), the second is divided into three. In addition to the first work, there is another discussion of some fundamental issues in Islamic theology. It is difficult to judge whether the first discussion is an introduction to the

his writings in theology, tried to promote a more rational understanding of Islam, in addition to his tireless endeavors to introduce Muʿtazilism in a more comprehensive way. Although it has been claimed that Islamic reform in Indonesia emerged under the influence of ʿAbduh's thought through his writings in *al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā* and *al-Manār* as well as his *Tafsīr al-Manār* and *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, the principal thought which underlay that reform has not been widely appreciated by Indonesian Muslims. This principal thought, according to Nasution, deals with his theological concepts that encourage young Muslims to maintain a rational and dynamic style of life.[22]

It remains unclear, however, what actually made Nasution interested in Muʿtazilism. But considering what he wrote in the introduction to his thesis, that ʿAbduh was confronted with the problems of Muslims' backwardness *vis-à-vis* the West, and his effort to lift up Muslims' position through giving a prominent place to reason, it seems understandable that Nasution attempted to apply ʿAbduh's ideas to his country. He believed that Indonesian Muslims were in the same position as Egyptian Muslims at the time when ʿAbduh began to disseminate his theological ideas. Like ʿAbduh, through this Muʿtazilism, Nasution tried to cherish the aspirations of his co-religionists in order to be able to subdue the power of traditionalism.[23] He hoped to use ʿAbduh's ideas and Muʿtazilī *kalām* as the basis for establishing a modern, rationalist Islamic philosophy and theology. Nasution insisted further that, as noted previously, if Muslims are to come to terms with modernity, it is essential that they replace Ashʿarism with Muʿtazilism as their theological worldview.[24] He also argues that the revival of Muʿtazilī thought is essential for the modernization of Islam. By promoting Muʿtazilism he expected to establish "an Islamic modernity capable of competing with Western moderni-

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second. Nevertheless, in discussing its subject matters, the first is more exhaustive. Muʿin's *Ilmu Kalam* was originally his lecture notes for the course of "Ilmu Tauhid' or science of the unity of God, presented some years before its publication. Muʿin also divides his work into three parts: the history of the development of *tawḥīd*; the problems of *Īmān* and *Islām*; and the problems of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* which, according to Muʿin, are the primary issues of Islamic theology.

[22] Harun Nasution, *Muhammad ʿAbduh dan Teologi Rasional Muʿtazilah* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1987), p. 1.

[23] Harun Nasution, "The Place of Reason in ʿAbduh's Theology: Its Impact on His Theological System and Views' (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1968), p. 11.

[24] Richard C. Martin at al., *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, p. 165.

ties on an equal footing, but retaining the deeply pious attitudes characteristic of traditional Islam."[25]

2. Nasution's Presentation of Muʿtazilism

Nasution discusses Muʿtazilism in two different works. The first is in his *Teologi Islam* and the second is in his *Islam Rasional*.[26] The contents and the approaches of these two works are not greatly different, except that in the second, Nasution has an historical introduction of how Islamic theological problems emerged in the early Muslim community. Therefore, Nasution begins with a discussion of the murder of ʿUthmān, the third Caliph, in 35/656. The theological significance of ʿUthmān's murder dealt with the status of Muslims who murdered ʿUthmān and of those who commit a grave sin, and whether or not they remain believers. This historical background does not appear in Nasution's discussion of Muʿtazilism in the first work, since he discusses it more extensively in the first chapter of the book.[27] It is possible to assume that the second work was an

[25] Ibid., p. 159.

[26] For the first see, *Teologi Islam*, Chapter V: "Kaum Muʿtazilah" (pp. 38-60), and for the second see *Islam Rasional*, pp. 126-138, under the title "Kaum Muʿtazilah dan Pandangan Rasionalnya." The latter has been discussed extensively by Richard C. Martin, et al., in ibid., especially in chapters VIII and IX (pp. 158-196). Chapter IX of this work is devoted to translating Nasution's "Kaum Muʿtazilah dan Pandangan Rasionalnya." It is difficult to trace back the original purpose of Nasution's writing of the second work, since the book, as a compilation of Nasution's articles, has no list of sources from which these articles are compiled. But, according to Martin, it was a lecture probably delivered to an audience consisting of IAIN students and the Muslim public. Even the date of writing is also unclear, as it reads only "Ciputat, 31-5-7." Martin notes that it is a printing error, and thus it is impossible to determine exactly when it was written. But he speculates that the text dates from the time when Nasution was rector of the IAIN, 1974-1982. Therefore, it can be assumed that the text was written some time in the second half of the 1970s, during which Nasution was a very active scholar and prolific writer. See Martin, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, p. 171. It is amazing, however, that Martin did not mention Nasution's discussion of Muʿtazilism in *Teologi Islam*, or the reason why he chose the second rather than the first work. Martin also failed to mention *Teologi Islam* in his bibliography.

[27] Martin and others have remarked why Nasution begins his discussion of the Muʿtazilite theology with an examination of its historical background, that is the civil strife which erupted over the murder of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān in 35/656. Based on his Western scholarly training, Nasution was readily shaped by the Western academic traditions, particularly in applying an historical approach in his analysis. This is in contrast to al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024) whose exposition of *al-uṣūl al-khamsah* is discussed by Martin in pp. 59-115. ʿAbd al-Jabbār begins his discussion of Muʿtazilism with an explanation of the duty of the reason, that it is incumbent upon all human kinds to know that God exists. He was not concerned with history,

abridgment of the first, to be presented in a seminar or as a special publication. In the following discussion of Nasution's presentation of Muʿtazilism, I will focus on his *Teologi Islam*.

In chapter five of the *Teologi Islam*, Nasution directly discusses Muʿtazilism as a theological school belonging to a group (*kaum*, from Arabic *qawm*) of people who discussed theological issues more profoundly and philosophically. In their discussion, they relied very much on reason, and thus they were known as the rationalist group of Muslims (*kaum rasionalis Islam*). Nasution then proceeds to analyze how the name "Muʿtazilah" was applied to them. He refers to al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* in which it was reported that the name Muʿtazilah originated from an encounter at the Basra mosque between al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), who held a course for his students, and Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ (d. 131/748) and his friend ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd (d. 144/761). One day, there was a student who came to al-Baṣrī asking him about his idea concerning the status of a grave sinner. In the Kharijite's point of view this grave sinner was an infidel, but for the Murji'ites he was a believer. While al-Baṣri was thinking about the issue, Wāṣil spontaneously came up and pronounced his own idea that the grave sinner was neither a believer nor an infidel, but in between. Wāṣil then stood up and left al-Baṣrī's circle, taking another place in the mosque where he repeated his idea. At this, al-Baṣrī was reported to have said: "Wāṣil has seceded from us" (*iʿtazala ʿannā Wāṣil*). Thus, Wāṣil and his friends were called the Muʿtazilites.[28]

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since his project was to systematize a doctrine that could be used as a means to defend Islam against its enemies. See *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, pp. 174-175.

[28] Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 38, quoting al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* (Cairo, 1951), vol. 1, p. 48. Nasution also refers to a more recent theory promoted by a modern Egyptian scholar, Aḥmad Amīn, in his *Fajr al-Islām*. Amīn maintained that the name Muʿtazilah had been in use prior to the dispute between Wāṣil and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, as well as before the idea of *al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn* was put in circulation. The word *muʿtazilah*, according to his examination, was used to designate a group of people who refused to take part in a political dispute between the confronting fractions among Muslims, since the time of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Based on al-Ṭabarī's account, when Qays b. Saʿad arrived at Egypt as a new governor assigned by the Caliph ʿAlī, he found the people were in disagreement with each other. A group were willing to accept him as a new ruler, while others refused and seceded to Kharbītah (*iʿtazalat ilā Kharbītah*). In his report to ʿAlī, Qays describes those who seceded as *muʿtazilīn*. To sum up, the words *iʿtazala* and *muʿtazilah* were in use about a hundred years before the dispute between Wāṣil and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in the sense that a group of people refrained from political disputes. According to Nasution, Muʿtazilah in the sense promoted by Aḥmad Amīn

As Nasution himself concurred, there is no general agreement among scholars on the origin of the name of Muʿtazilah. But the name is commonly attributed to a group of people upholding a rational and liberal theology, who emerged after the affair of Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. On the other hand, it also remains in dispute as to who gave the name Muʿtazilah to Wāṣil and his group. Some scholars say that it was their adversaries who gave them this name. But considering what the Muʿtazilites said about themselves, one could conclude that it was they themselves who took the name Muʿtazilah for their group, or at least, they did not show any objection to this name. Nasution refers to al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, who stated that the word *iʿtazala* is used in the Qurʾān to indicate the meaning of avoiding the wicked. Thus it has a notion of reverence rather than of derision. Likewise, Ibn al-Murtaḍā, another later Muʿtazilite scholar, claimed that it was the Muʿtazilites themselves who adopted the name Muʿtazilah for their group.[29] After all, as a group the Muʿtazilites emerged through the work of Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ, whom the historian al-Masʿūdī described as the *shaykh al-Muʿtazilah wa-qadīmuhā*, the leader of the Muʿtazilah and their ancient forerunner.[30]

Very briefly, Nasution discusses some prominent Muʿtazilite figures with their respective contributions to the shaping of Muʿtazilī doctrines. Wāṣil, the so-called founding father of Muʿtazilism, began his studies at Medina under Abū Hāshim ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Hanafīyah. Then he moved to Basra, where he met al-Ḥasan

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was more a purely political term, and the Muʿtazilah promoted by the classical heresiographers was more theological, although its basic consideration was also political. The theological notion of the latter idea was based on the fact that they tried to solve their political disputes from a theological perspective. See Nasution, ibid., p. 40.

[29] Nasution, ibid., p. 42, quoting Ṣubḥī, *Fī ʿIlm al-Kalām*, pp. 75-76. In more recent edition of Ṣubḥī's work see his *Fī ʿIlm al-Kalām: Dirāsah Falsafīyah li-Ārāʾ al-Firaq al-Islāmīyah fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍat al-ʿArabīyah, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 108-109. However, the Muʿtazilites did not only use this appellation. They frequently called themselves the *ahl al-ʿadl* or the proponents of divine justice, and sometimes also *ahl al-ʿadl wa'l-tawḥīd* or the proponents of divine justice and unity. Yet, their adversaries called them *al-Qadarīyah*, due to their perseverance in promoting the doctrine of free will; *al-Muʿaṭṭilah* for their denial that God has attributes; and also *al-Waʿīdīyah*, for their strict adherence to the idea that God would never fail to inflict His punishment to those who disobey His commands.

[30] See Nasution, *Teologi Islam Aliran-aliran*, p. 43; Ṣubḥī, ibid., p. 107, quoting al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Maʿdinat al-Ǧawhar* (Beirut: Jāmiʿah Lubnānīyah, 1965), vol. 3, p. 152.

al-Baṣrī and studied under his tutelage. The first principle taught by Wāṣil was a position between the two positions, *al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*. With this principle, the Muʿtazilites rejected the idea held by the Kharijites that a grave sinner was an infidel (*kāfir*), and also rejected the idea held by the Murjiʾites that a grave sinner was a believer (*muʾmin*). For the Muʿtazilites a grave sinner was a *fāsiq*, an appellation for those who were in between belief and unbelief. The term *muʾmin*, according to Wāṣil, is an honorific that should not be attributed to a *fāsiq*, for he has sinned. Yet the designation *kāfir* (infidel) is not suitable either, since the grave sinner (among Muslims) has pronounced his testimony of belief, or the *shahādah*, and has done good deeds. Such a person would dwell eternally in Hell if he did not repent. However, the torments to be inflicted upon him would be less severe than those inflicted upon an infidel.[31]

Another principle taught by Wāṣil was the *qadarīyah*, as outlined by both Maʿbad and Ghaylān. God, according to Wāṣil, is most wise and just. He will not implement injustice, and it is impossible for Him to cause someone to commit evil act or to violate His commands. Therefore, it is the human himself who is really responsible for his actions, whether good or evil, including his belief or unbelief. It depends on a human's own decision in choosing obedience or disobedience, with the consequence that he will find either reward or punishment. God has bestowed upon the individual this power of choice for this very reason. Based on this argument, the Muʿtazilites insisted that it is impossible for God to give a command to a human that he does not have a capacity to fulfill. Nasution suggests that Wāṣil might have adopted this idea from Ghaylān through Abū Hāshim. Yet, quoting al-Nashshār, Nasution also reveals that it is possible that Wāṣil had a direct contact with Ghaylān.[32]

Wāṣil is also known as the first person among the Muʿtazilites to promote the idea that God has no attributes (*nafy al-ṣifah*). According to him, what people consider as attributes of God are actually not attributes which exist outside of the essence of God. God's attributes are His essence alone. Following al-Shahrastānī's examination, Nasution insists that this principle was not fully developed by Wāṣil. It was only further elaborated by his followers after they had acquainted

[31] Nasution, ibid., p. 43, quoting *al-Milal*, vol. 1, p. 48.
[32] Ibid., p. 44, quoting al-Nashshār, *Nashʾat al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī'l-Islām*, p. 435.

themselves with Greek philosophy.[33] These are the basic principles held by Wāṣil. Two of these principles, the position between two positions (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*) and the rejection of God's attributes, later became integral constituents of the five principles of Muʿtazilism, called *al-uṣūl al-khamsah*. The other three are divine justice (*al-ʿadl*), promise and threat (*al-waʿd wa'l-waʿīd*), and commanding the good and forbidding the evil (*al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*).

Wāṣil was reported to have had two disciples, Bishr b. Saʿīd and Abū ʿUthmān al-Zaʿfarānī. These two disciples transmitted the primary doctrines of Wāṣil to the other two leading figures of the Muʿtazilites, Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. 227/841) and Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 210/825). While Abū al-Hudhayl remained at Basra and became the second leader of its Muʿtazilite chapter,[34] Bishr moved to Baghdad and established another Muʿtazilite chapter in this new region. Muʿtazilism, and the formulation of its doctrines, was thus split into these two identifiable leanings.

Abū al-Hudhayl, as the second leader of the Basran Muʿtazilites after Wāṣil, had a great deal of familiarity with (Greek) philosophy. His profound knowledge of philosophy allowed him to formulate more established principles of Muʿtazilism. In addition, his proficiency in logic also allowed him to be an eloquent defender of the Islamic faith against Zoroastrian and Manichaean critics. Abū al-Hudhayl was also known for his elaborate discussion of *nafy al-ṣifah*, or the refusal to assign attributes to God, a concept originally introduced by Wāṣil. Based on Wāṣil's point of view, it was impossible for God to have attributes with a distinct existence attached to His essence. Since God's essence is eternal (*qadīm*), anything attached to it must

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[33] Ibid., quoting *al-Milal*, vol. 1, p. 46. The Muʿtazilites' denial of the attributes of God was adopted from Jahm b. Ṣafwān who maintained that God cannot be attributed with human attributes. Jahm argued that ascribing such attributes to God would lead to the notion of anthropomorphism (*al-tajassum*). However, unlike the Muʿtazilites, Jahm upheld that God has attributes of power, action and creation. As the upholder of *jabarīyah* or fatalism, Jahm believed that it is only God who has power, action, and creation. Humans have no power at all. In spite of Jahm's adherence to fatalism—which was totally against the Muʿtazilite doctrines—his rejection of God's attributes (*nafy al-ṣifah*) was wholeheartedly adopted by Muʿtazilites. See Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 44.

[34] Abū al-Hudhayl was also reported to have moved to Baghdad later, and died in this city between 840 and 850. He began to settle there permanently in about 818, and was presented to the Caliph al-Maʾmūn by Thumāmah. See W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 219.

be equally eternal, and thus it leads to a conclusion that the attribute is also eternal. It implies that there is more than one eternal being. Since the eternal being can only be God alone, nothing else can be considered eternal, including His attributes. Therefore, for the necessity of maintaining God's absolute unity, or the purity of *tawḥīd*, God must not be predicated with attributes in the above manner.[35] God, according to the Muʿtazilite's point of view, does not create humans because He needs something from them or because He has a special interest in them. On the contrary, God wants nothing except meritorious things for humans. Based on this idea, another Muʿtazilite principle was developed; that God must give the good and the best things to human, called the *al-ṣalāḥ wa'l-aṣlaḥ*.[36] The Muʿtazilites believed that God was, in actuality, able to treat unjustly or to tell lies to human. But it is impossible for God to do so, because such actions would revoke God's goodness. God as the most perfect being is incapable of doing evil. All of His actions must be good.[37]

Nasution then proceeds to discuss some other scholars who belonged to the Muʿtazilite school of Baghdad, which was founded by Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād (d. 215/ 830). Among the prominent figures of the Baghdad Muʿtazilites was Abū Mūsā al-Murdār (d. 226/841).

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[35] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[36] For an interesting discussion on *al-ṣalāḥ wa'l-aṣlaḥ*, see Eric Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute over al-Ghazālī's "Best of All Possible Worlds"* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984). Ormsby translated *al-ṣalāḥ* as "the optimum" or "the most salutary." The issue of *al-ṣalāḥ wa'l-aṣlaḥ*, according to his examination, basically deals with the idea of divine justice maintained by the Muʿtazilites. "To declare God just meant … to hold that He does no wrong nor does He choose it, nor does He fail to fulfill what is obligatory upon Him, and all His acts are good. Furthermore, divine justice meant not only that God performed the good, and, indeed, even the obligatory, but that He was in some way obliged to provide 'the optimum' … for His creatures." See ibid., p. 21. However, the belief that God must provide the best for human was criticized by other theologians and was blamed for being outrageous and untenable. First, it was considered obnoxious to speak that God had an obligation; and second, it was unthinkable to say that God had provided the best, since anyone can see that the world is filled with injustices, terrifying diseases, miseries and misfortunes. Ibn Ḥazm (d. 457/1064) was reported to have said that the believers in "the optimum" were likely absent from the world, or, if they were not absent, their intelligence had been stripped from them (*al-Fiṣal fī'l-Milal*, vol. 3, p. 121). Al-Taftāzānī is also quoted as saying "if the best for man had been obligatory upon God, He would have not created the infidel, the pauper, and the person tormented in this world and the next, and especially (not) those beset with illness, pain, trials, and disasters." Ibid., pp. 219-220, quoting from *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 2, p. 123.

[37] Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 47, quoting al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* (Istanbul, 1930), vol. 2, p. 249.

He maintained that the Qur'ān is not eternal (*qadīm*) but created by God. Thus he regarded a person upholding that the Qur'ān was eternal as an infidel because he believed that there were two eternal beings. Upholding such a belief could be considered a form of polytheism. Al-Murdār also maintained that human actions are not created by God, but are produced by humans themselves. God, in his opinion, cannot be seen through human eyes.

Another prominent figure of the Baghdad Muʿtazilite school discussed by Nasution is Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d. 300/912). In his examination of God's attributes, al-Khayyāṭ insisted that will, or volition, is not an attribute attached to God's essence. God does not exercise His will through His essence. If it is said that God possesses a will, or has the power of volition, it means that He knows, has a power, and is not compelled to undertake His actions. If God wills something, it implies that He creates those actions in accordance with His knowledge. On the other hand, if it is said that He wills human's actions, it signifies that God gives them commands to undertake the actions. To say that God hears, according to al-Khayyāṭ, means that God knows all audible things. Likewise, to say that God sees, means He knows all visible matters. This is the way al-Khayyāṭ interprets the denial of God's attributes.

Besides those individual figures with their respective doctrinal teachings, there is a common set of principles that everybody who claimed to be a Muʿtazilite had to adopt. These common principles are called *al-uṣūl al-khamsah*, or the five principles of Muʿtazilism. According to al-Khayyāṭ, only those persons who fully adhered to these five principles could be called true Muʿtazilites. These are: *al-tawḥīd, al-ʿadl, al-waʿd wa'l-waʿīd, al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn,* and *al-amr bi'l-maʿrūf wa'l-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (respectively, belief in one God, divine justice, promise and threat, a position between two positions, and commanding the good and prohibiting the evil). Nasution's examination of Muʿtazilism is then focused on these principles.

According to Nasution, the Muʿtazilites are no longer extant. They only existed in the historical past. By the time he wrote his book, Muʿtazilism was seen as an errant school of thought in Islam, and thus was considered repugnant. Such a perspective emerged from the misunderstanding that the Muʿtazilites did not believe in revelation, due to their heavy reliance on reason. However, according to Nasution, the Muʿtazilites did not only rely on reason, but they also used the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth to support their arguments. The

people did not like Muʿtazilism, argued Nasution, because of the Muʿtazilites' insistence on using coercion in spreading their doctrines in the early ninth century. Moreover, Muʿtazilism was misunderstood because their books had disappeared by the thirteenth century, and were not re-examined until they were rediscovered in the mid-twentieth century.[38] The people learnt about Muʿtazilism only from secondary resources like the reports of al-Ashʿarī or al-Māturīdī. As the adversaries of Muʿtazilism, their writings were not always objective. They often condemned Muʿtazilites as infidels. Al-Baghdādī, for instance, called them a deviating group (*firqat al-ḍalāl*), and in describing Muʿtazilite doctrines he frequently used the words *bidʿah faḍīḥah* (blameworthy heresy), and *ḍalālah* (straying).

It was only under the influence of al-Afghānī and ʿAbduh that an appreciation of Muʿtazilism emerged. They were followed by some other *ʿulamāʾ* who saw Muʿtazilite doctrines and their role in Islamic history in a positive light. Nasution refers to al-Nashshār, a professor of Islamic philosophy at the University of Alexandria, who wrote in defense of the Muʿtazilite al-Naẓẓām:

> Many of Ahl al-Sunnah thinkers attacked al-Naẓẓām and regarded him as a great atheist. They accused him of having deeply indulged in lusts. However, we should not trust this accusation so quickly. The Muʿtazilites were known as ascetic, God fearing and observant in their ritual devotions.[39]

Al-Nashshār also considered al-Naẓẓām to be a decent and veracious person who made numerous efforts to defend Islam.

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[38] The rediscovery of Muʿtazilite works took place in 1951 in Ṣanʿāʾ, Yemen. An Egyptian scholarly expedition led by Khalīl Yaḥyā Nāmī and Fuʾād al-Sayyid was sent to the city to examine manuscripts, some of which were known as the works of the great Muʿtazilite scholar, al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār. After spending some months photographing those manuscripts, the expedition returned to Egypt with great success. They brought with them approximately three hundred photographed manuscripts. See Yusuf Rahman, "The Miraculous Nature of Muslim Scripture: A Study of ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1995), pp. 65-66. For further information on this discovery of the manuscripts, see G.C. Anawati, "Une oevre muʿtazilite inédite: Le *Mugnī* du Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Gabbār," in *Akten des Vierundzwanzigsten Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses. Munchen 28 August bis 4 September 1957,* ed. H. Franke (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft, 1959), pp. 288-292; R. Caspar and Mahmoud el-Khodeiri, "Une somme inedite de theologie moʿtazilite: le *Moghnī* du Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār." *MIDEO*, vol. 4 (1957), pp. 281-316.

[39] Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 57, quoting al-Nashshār, *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī'l-Islām*, vol. 1, p. 582.

Aḥmad Amīn, another contemporary Egyptian scholar, was also reported to have said that the Muʿtazilites were the first group of Muslims who ventured to use a means previously employed only by the enemies of Islam in their attacks on the early Abbasid caliphate. Thus they made great efforts to defend Islam, and it was only they who undertook that effort. Amīn regarded the disappearance of Muʿtazilism as a great calamity for Muslims. He suggested that if the Muʿtazilite doctrines had been firmly upheld by Muslims until today, the position of Muslims in the world would have been quite different. Their inclination to submit themselves too hastily to the fate had caused their weakness. Likewise, fatalism enfeebled them just as too much reliance on God's decrees (*tawakkul*) made them inert. Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā of al-Azhar, another contemporary scholar, also supported Muʿtazilism, especially its doctrine of free will. He did not deny that upholding an idea of free will would imply that God's absolute power is limited. He insisted that if God's will and power are limited by others, it means He is weak. On the contrary, if God has absolute will and power, regardless of all rules and wisdom, He is the God of despots or tyrants. Therefore, the real God is He who on His own will has limited His power wisely. This is the real, just God.[40]

Finally, at the end of the chapter, Nasution suggested that in modern times with the advance of science and technology, the rational teachings of the Muʿtazilites have been revived among Muslims, especially among the educated. They have adopted, though unconsciously, some ideas that are close to Muʿtazilite doctrines. However, adopting such a doctrine does not necessarily exclude them from the mainstream of Islam.

In presenting Nasution's Muʿtazilism, I have relied primarily on his *Teologi Islam*. As has been noted previously, the first part of this book—including the discussion of Muʿtazilism—was originally drawn up from the notes of Nasution's lecture on Islamic theology. Nevertheless, considering what he has in his bibliography, Nasution seemed to have had only a limited access to the primary sources of Muʿtazilism. Among the works he referred to in this part of the book, only two of them were written by Muʿtazilite scholars: al-Khayyāṭ's *al-Intiṣār* (1957) and ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah* (1965).

[40] Ibid., p. 58, quoting Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā, *al-Qur'ān wa'l-Falsafah* (Cairo, 1966), p. 98.

Therefore, his discussion of Muʿtazilism is mostly based on secondary resources, including al-Shahrastānī's *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, Aḥmad Maḥmūd Ṣubḥī's *Fī ʿIlm al-Kalām*, al-Nashshār's *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām*, in addition to al-Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* and al-Baghdādī's *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*. As Nasution himself admitted, some of these works were written by Muslim heresiographers who perceived Muʿtazilism as an errant school of thought, and, thus, their account of Muʿtazilism was not fully reliable. This limited access to a complete library collection was also subjected to the appraisal of Martin and others, in their discussion of "Kaum Muʿtazilah dan Pandangan Rasionalnya," in which it was stated:

> It should be kept in mind that at the time he wrote this paper, Nasution did not have access to a library collection comparable to those found in Western universities. He probably relied extensively on notes taken during his days in Egypt and Canada and on his extensive, but necessarily limited, personal library.[41]

On the other hand, Nasution seemed to have no access to the works of Western scholars on this issue. This could be because at the time he studied at McGill, Western scholars had not yet paid enough attention to Islamic theology, let alone to Muʿtazilism. Their works on this issue were very scarce and Nasution mentioned only a few of them in his bibliography. Nevertheless, he failed to refer to W. Montgomery Watt's *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (1948) as an important resource in discussing Muʿtazilism. Watt devoted the fourth chapter of the book to a comprehensive examination of Muʿtazilism.[42]

Nasution's discussion of Muʿtazilism, though brief enough, provides us with a deeper insight into this area of theological thought. He could be the first Indonesian scholar who has presented Muʿtazilism in an impartial manner to Indonesian readers. It is true that before him, other scholars made some effort to introduce Muʿtazilite theol-

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[41] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, p. 171.

[42] See W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination of Early Islam* (London: Luzac, 1948), pp. 61-92. Since the work was published in 1948, Nasution should have read this book while he was at McGill (1962-1968). Nevertheless he did not use this work for any part of his theological discussions. However, Nasution used some works by Wensinck (1965), McDonald (1964), Caspar (1957), and Gardet (1948) for the other parts of the book, but not for his discussion of Muʿtazilism. Other works by Watt also appear in his bibliography: *Mahomet a la Mecque* (1958) and *Muhammad Prophet and Statesman* (1961). Yet, these works are not of Islamic theology but of Islamic history.

ogy. However, they were either cursorily (and to some extent less impartially) made or presented in a lesser academic style. In fact, as early as 1939, M. Natsir (1908-1993), a venerated modernist thinker and once a leader of the Masyumi Islamic party, wrote an article on Muʿtazilism, entitled "Aliran Muʿtazilah dan Ahli Sunnah: ʿRasionalismeʾ dalam Islam dan Reaksi Atasnya" (The School of Muʿtazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah: Islamic ʿRationalismʾ and the Reaction against it).[43] In this article, Natsir presents the main features of Muʿtazilism, including its historical setting, its main leaders, its primary doctrines, and finally the reactions against it. On this final issue, Natsir reports a debate between al-Jubbāʾī and his disciple, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, which led to the triumph of the latter.[44] With this victory, al-Ashʿarī left al-Jubbāʾī's circle and established his own school of thought, Ashʿarism. Natsir illustrated this triumph as the triumph of Sunnism over Muʿtazilism. He maintained that Ashʿarism emerged as a protest against the exaggerated reliance on pure rational approach advocated by the Muʿtazilites. They assumed that all mysteries of the universe—even those of God—could be discovered through human rational capacity.[45] Interestingly enough, Natsir, as reported by Martin, was very disappointed to learn that ʿAbduh, his beloved model whom he considered to be the founder of Islamic modernism, was actually a Muʿtazilite theologian.[46]

3. Muʿin and Hanafi on Muʿtazilism

With regard to Nasution's position on the attempt to introduce Muʿtazilism to Indonesian readers, it is interesting to reconsider the works of Muʿin and Hanafi on this subject. In Muʿin's *Ilmu Kalam* (which first appeared 1966), Muʿtazilism is categorized as a sect in Islam, of the same class as Shiʿism, Kharijism and that of the Jabrites. Muʿin's discussion of this issue is really very short, and it lacks a systematic approach. First he discusses the founder of the school, i.e., Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ. Muʿin emphasizes the fact that the group did not

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[43] The article first appeared in *al-Manar* (June-September, 1939), and was reprinted in M. Natsir, *Kebudayaan Islam dalm Perspektif Sejarah*, edited by H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari (Jakarta: Girimukti Pasaka, 1988), pp. 121-158.

[44] For another account of this debate see Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought*, p. 23. See also Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, pp. 65-66, in his discussion of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaʿah.

[45] See Natsir, *Kebudayaan Islam*, pp. 147-148.

[46] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, p. 167.

like the name Muʿtazilah, and preferred to identify themselves as the people of divine justice and unity, *ahl al-ʿadl wa'l-tawḥīd*. Their insistence on divine justice, according to Muʿin, was due to the opposition to fatalistic ideas maintained by their adversaries, the Jabrites. For the Muʿtazilite, it would be unjust for God to predetermine humans to do wrong and then punish them for what He had compelled them to do. Humans, according to the Muʿtazilites, should be free to determine their own will and actions, through which they will be either rewarded or punished. With respect to divine unity, Muʿin explains that in the Muʿtazilite's point of view, God has no attributes, since otherwise it would imply that He is multiple.[47]

Muʿin also discusses the Muʿtazilite principal doctrines, which he classifies into five categories; including grave sin, free will (*qudrah*), divine justice, rational capacity, and promise and threat. It is questionable, however, on what basis Muʿin makes such distinctions. There seems to be no other scholar who puts forth such a categorization of the Muʿtazilite doctrines. His exposition as such, seems unfounded or arbitrary. He also explains that in Muʿtazilite doctrine, a Muslim who commits a grave sin but fails to repent before his death, must be regarded as neither a believer nor unbeliever. He is a *fāsiq*, and will be sent to Hell to dwell therein eternally. Concerning free will, Muʿin suggests that according to the Muʿtazilite, a human is free to determine his own will and acts. It is the human himself who creates his own actions, and thus he will be rewarded or punished based on the exercise of this free will.

Concerning the issue of divine unity, Muʿin repeats his previous explanation that what the Muʿtazilites meant with this idea is that God has no attributes. He is unique, does not resemble any of His creation, has no physical body, and does not consist of any partial element. With regard to human rational capacity, Muʿin emphasizes that humans, through their reason, must recognize good and bad equally, although revelation does not come to them. Regarding promise and threat, Muʿin reports that God will not forgive a human's grave sin except if he repents of it before death. God will fulfill His promise and threat which will never change. Amazingly, Muʿin concludes that the Muʿtazilite's doctrine is a mixture of the Qadarite and the Jahmite doctrines, but he fails to mention in what aspects their doctrines mix

[47] KHM. Taib Thahir Abd. Muʿin, *Ilmu Kalam* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1981), p. 103.

with each other.[48] On the other hand, Muʿin also considers that the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the imamate is similar to that upheld by the Shiʿites, that the promised *imām* will appear (on the last day?) to extend divine justice and unity throughout the world. But again, he neglects to give a more elaborate explanation of this issue.

Unlike Nasution who tries to describe Islamic schools of thought impartially as they appeared in history, Muʿin tends to make his own judgements of those schools. When he discusses the Qadarīyah, for instance, he states that although Maʿbad al-Juhanī, the founder of this school, was an *ʿālim* having a deep knowledge of the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, in the end, he went astray by inventing erroneous opinions. Among those erroneous opinions, according to Muʿin, are that God does not know anything about humans' actions, and that all of their actions are produced by themselves, none of which are created by God. In a more striking judgement, Muʿin insists that the whole Muslim community has agreed to judge the Qadarites as belonging to the group of infidels.[49]

Muʿin seemed to be very much unaware of Muʿtazilism. At the very least, he was not well acquainted with this school of thought. His cursory treatment of this theological school might have happened due to his limited access to Muʿtazilite literature.[50] However, it is still possible to assume that he himself misperceived Muʿtazilim as a false school of thought, which every Muslim had to try to avoid. Muʿin, therefore, can be regarded as representing those of his generation who perceived Muʿtazilism as an odious *madhhab*, outside the pale of mainstream Islam.

Unlike Muʿin, Hanafi has an extensive discussion of this subject

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[48] Muʿin does not give any explanation on this matter. However, it may be referred to our earlier discussion, that in spite of Jahm's adherence to a fatalistic theological point of view, Jahm upheld that God cannot be attributed with attributes that are commonly known to describe human beings. The denial of God's attributes is a belief also upheld by the Muʿtazilites. See supra, n. 33.

[49] Ibid., p. 238.

[50] Muʿin does not discuss Muʿtazilism in a particular chapter, as Nasution and Hanafi do, but merely puts it as a subchapter under the more general issue, "Agama Islam dan Aliran-alirannya" (The Religion of Islam and its Schisms). Thus his discussion on this issue was very short, less than four pages (pp. 102-105). In his bibliography for this chapter (he puts his bibliography at the end of each chapter), Muʿin does not mention any specific work on Muʿtazilism. Among the twelve works listed in this bibliography, only two of them are directly related to theology: *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, which is (erroneously) attributed to Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī; and *al-Jānib al-Ilāhī* of Muḥammad al-Bahī. The rest deal with either *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth* or history.

matter, almost equal in length to that of Nasution's. As has been discussed earlier, Hanafi wrote two different works on Islamic theology: *Pengantar Theology Islam* (1967) and *Theology Islam (Ilmu Kalam)* (1974). Since the first gives a more complete examination of Muʿtazilism, I will rely more exclusively on this work in the following discussion. To some extent, however, Hanafi's presentation is more complete than that of Nasution, except that it is not as well organized, and it lacks a general academic approach.[51]

Hanafi divides his presentation into six parts: the cultural background of the emergence of Muʿtazilism; the origin of the name Muʿtazilah; Muʿtazilite figures; their principal doctrines; their philosophical thought; and a general retrospective. He begins his discussion by praising Muʿtazilism as the most notable and the oldest Islamic theological school to make a substantial contribution to the early development of Islamic thought. If people want to know more about Islamic philosophy, Hanafi suggests, they have to discover it in the works of the Muʿtazilites, not in those written by the so-called Muslim philosophers.[52] Through their proficiency in philosophy—though they did not mean to be philosophers themselves—in support of their theological conceptions, the Muʿtazilites appeared as defenders of Islam against the attacks of its adversaries by using the same weapon.

Muʿtazilism began to emerge, according to Hanafi, early in the first Islamic century, in Basra, the center of Islamic learning and culture. This city was also a center of cultural interchange among many different religious traditions. Under such conditions, there were many parties who did not sincerely embrace Islam as their new faith. They came to Islam mostly out of fear of Islamic political expansion during the early Umayyad period. They were non-Arab converts who felt great envy and hatred toward Umayyad domination, which allowed for the monopolization of all political and economic power in the hands of the Arab rulers. Their insincere adherence to Islam

[51] Hanafi's *Pengantar Theology Islam* is more focused on Islamic theological schools which include Muʿtazilism, Ashʿarism, Maturidism, the Salaf, and Wahhabism. In addition, Hanafi also includes ʿAbduh and Ibn Rushd as Muslim theologians to be considered equivalent to those schools of thought. Hanafi has used endnotes at the end of the book indicating his references. But, in so doing, he did not follow the standard Western academic style. Likewise, the list his bibliography is also very rudimentarily made.

[52] A. Hanafi, *Pengantar Theology Islam*, p. 64; *Theology Islam (Ilmu Kalam)*, p. 44.

gave impetus to a desire to destroy Islam from within, since they believed that Islam was only a source of power for the glory and might of the Umayyads.[53] Hanafi's idea is in line with an account reported by Watt, that in Iraq there were people who professed Islam but secretly believed in *zandaqah*, or heresy. In particular, there were groups classified as the Manichaeans (Mānawīyah), Dayṣānites and Marcionites (Marqūnīyah), who mingled dualistic speculations with Hellenistic ideas.[54] Hanafi also referred to the Rafidites, an extreme Shiʿite sect, who incorporated Islamic doctrines with their beliefs in incarnation and the possibility that God might dwell in a human body. The Muʿtazilites, representing sincere Muslim scholars in response to these deviancies, developed *kalām*-based theological arguments, which then allowed them to acquire a degree of skill in countering the attacks of their adversaries.

Like Nasution, Hanafi also distinguished between the Basra and the Baghdad Muʿtazilite schools. He tried to emphasize the cultural and geographical backgrounds that made them different from each other. The city of Basra was established earlier than Baghdad, and was much earlier acquainted with various trends of religious traditions and thoughts. However, although Baghdad was founded later than Basra, as the capital of the Abbasid Empire, more religious and cultural traditions could exert their influence on its citizens. Quoting Aḥmad Amīn, Hanafi insisted that Baghdad grew as a cultural broker which transmitted the Greek legacy to the Arab world. Many works of the Greek philosophers were translated into Arabic under the auspices of the caliphs. Moreover, the Abbasid courts were also used to facilitate the meeting of Muslim thinkers and literati with sages of different religious affiliations. Yet, according to Hanafi, Basra remained distinct from Baghdad in the sense that the Basran Muʿtazilites were more concerned with theoretical matters and scientific achievements. On the contrary, the Baghdadian Muʿtazilites placed more emphasis on the application of Muʿtazilite principles to social and political life. They adopted some theoretical matters from their Basran counterparts, to be developed further and enriched in accordance with their own interests and aspirations.[55]

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[53] *Pengantar Theology Islam*, ibid., p. 64.

[54] W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), p. 187.

[55] Ibid., p. 70.

Hanafi also gives a short account of the Muʿtazilite figures of both the Basra and Baghdad schools. His descriptions, however, are not evenly made. Some are very brief, consisting of the figures' complete names and their roles in the movement (Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ, al-Khayyāṭ, ʿAbd al-Jabbār), while others are more detailed (al-Naẓẓām, Abū al-Hudhayl, al-Zamakhsharī). Hanafi only mentions eight Muʿtazilite figures altogether, representing both schools, with four figures for each. It is interesting that Hanafi also mentions al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār as among the proponents of the Baghdad school, together with al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). Although his account on ʿAbd al-Jabbār is only one paragraph in length, Hanafi mentions that among ʿAbd al-Jabbār's works were his comments on the principles of Muʿtazilism in a number of volumes. The works, by the time Hanafi was preparing his book, were in print in Cairo, with the title *al-Mughnī*. It is surprising, therefore, that Nasution, who prepares his book on Islamic theology later than Hanafi, does not mention ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *al-Mughnī* in his discussion of Muʿtazilism. Likewise, Nasution fails to discuss al-Zamakhsharī, whose Qurʾānic exegesis, *al-Kashshāf*, was widely known among Indonesian scholars.

Another interesting aspect of Hanafi's discussion of Muʿtazilism is his inclination to relate Muʿtazilism to the emergence of the philosophical movement in classical Islam. As has been noted before, Hanafi suggested that the Muʿtazilites were the earliest Muslims to make direct contact with non-Muslim intellectuals as the transmitters of the Greek legacy into Islam. The Muʿtazilites were then described as those who accommodated philosophical thought for Islamic theological arguments. Nevertheless, according to Hanafi, the Muʿtazilites, in adopting philosophy did not mean to develop philosophy as an independent academic enterprise but merely to use it as a means to defend Islam against the challenges of its adversaries.

Hanafi devotes a great deal of space to discussing Muʿtazilite philosophical thought. He takes twenty pages altogether to discuss this issue alone, which is more than a half of the whole space he devotes to Muʿtazilism.[56] It is unclear why he focuses his attention on this issue so much. Compare, for instance, his discussion of the

[56] Hanafi discussed Muʿtazilism in his *Pengantar Theology Islam* in pp. 64-103, twenty pages of which, pp. 80-100, are devoted to discussing Muʿtazilite philosophical thought.

Muʿtazilite principal doctrines which takes six pages, and his discussion of some Muʿtazilite figures which takes five pages only. This is in contrast to Nasution who did not even relate his discussion of Muʿtazilite theology to philosophy. It does not mean that in Nasution's opinion the Muʿtazilites did not share in the development of the philosophical movement in Islam. For Nasution, the Muʿtazilites were the group most interested in philosophy in the classical Islamic era. He reported that Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf, al-Naẓẓām, al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Jubbāʾī and other Muʿtazilite scholars were ardent readers of Greek philosophy, which in turn, greatly influenced their theological concepts. Nevertheless, Nasution did not discuss it in his work on Islamic theology, but in another work of his, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, in his exposition of the philosophical aspect of Islam.[57]

Hanafi's discussion of Muʿtazilite philosophical thought covers many different sides to the issue, such as the Muʿtazilite's attempt to make compromises between religion and philosophy, the position of reason before revelation (*al-fikr qabla wurūd al-sharʿ*), metaphysics, atomic theory, anthropology, and politics. However, it is not always easy to follow Hanafi's presentation, especially when he discusses metaphysics and the theory of atoms. Without clearly mentioning his references, it is difficult to check his use of technical terms in discussing the origin of the universe. He states, for instance, that according to the Muʿtazilite's point of view, the universe was created out of *al-ʿadam*, or nothingness. This position was adopted by the Muʿtazilites as a consequence of their status as defenders of Islamic belief. But since they also borrowed some aspects of philosophical thought, they did not take *al-ʿadam* at face value. For them, *al-ʿadam* was not absolute nothingness, but rather an entity (*shayʾ*) from which God created all existing beings. This is, among others, the way used by the Muʿtazilites to compromise between religious doctrines and philosophical principles. The Muʿtazilites, according to Hanafi, based

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[57] Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, vol. 2, p. 47. It is amazing, however, that Nasution only discusses this issue very slightly in his special work devoted to Islamic philosophy and mysticism, *Falsafat dan Misticisme dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973). He discusses it in his short description of the early contact of the Muslims with the Greek legacy (p. 10). For further discussion of the role of the Muʿtazilites in the development of Islamic philosophical movement in the early Islamic era, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 56-81.

their arguments on a postulate that knowledge must be based on an intelligible (*maʿlūm*) thing, as its object. Since *al-ʿadam* is intelligible (at least as a concept), so *al-ʿadam* (nothingness) is an entity in itself. On the other hand, since God's knowledge is eternal (*qadīm*), so the object of His knowledge must be eternal as well. Therefore, since God knows everything before it comes into being, everything has its entity through which it will be brought into being.[58]

Hanafi's examination of the problem of the world's creation may be made more comprehensible if one refers to the work of, for instance, Wolfson who discusses the issue extensively in his *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (1976). According to Wolfson, the issue of the world's creation has been a heated controversy among Muslim theologians. They were also in disagreement over whether or not the nonexistent (*al-maʿdūm*) is nothing (*lā shayʾ*) or something (*shayʾ*). Wolfson tried to trace this controversy back to the works of some classical scholars. Based on al-Baghdādī's report, al-Ṣāliḥī (d. 890), although himself a Muʿtazilite, objected to calling nonexistent (*al-maʿdūm*) something (*shayʾ*). Therefore, he is in agreement with the people of the Sunnah. Another report by Ibn Ḥazm stated that all Muʿtazilites, except Hishām al-Fuwātī (d. 840), maintained that nonexistent beings (*al-maʿdūmāt*) are things (*ashyāʾ*). The same idea is also reported by al-Shahrastānī who said that according to al-Saḥḥām (d. 850) nonexistent is something. The origin of controversy can actually be traced back to the earlier debates among the ancient Greek philosophers.[59]

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[58] Hanafi, *Pengantar Theology Islam*, pp. 85-86.

[59] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 359-360. Wolfson refers to Democritus and Leucippus, the Stoics, Plato, and Plotinus, in addition to Vaiseṣika of India. For another discussion on *al-maʿdūm* in Islamic philosophical terms, see Simon van den Bergh, " ʿAdam" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 1, pp. 178-179. *Al-ʿadam*, as reported by van den Bergh, from which the word *al-maʿdūm* is derived, is a translation of the Aristotelian term *privatio*, and means "the absence of existence or being." However, the word has two different meanings: (1) Absolute non-existence, that is absolute nothingness; and (2) relative non-existence, which can either signify (a) the absence of a quality in matter, or (b) the pure potentiality in matter. Since the absence of a quality may contain its opposite, it has as a potentiality a certain positive character. The Aristotelian theory of becoming is based entirely on this concept of *privatio*. There is no absolute becoming; all becoming is the actualization of a relative non-existent or potentiality. Influenced by the Stoics, however, Muʿtazilite scholars maintained that the non-existent is a thing (*shayʾ*), an entity (*dhāt*), and something positive (*thābit*). They held that before the existence of the world God knew the entities which He was going to create, and what He knew had a certain

Wolfson insists that in Islamic belief, as in Judaism and Christianity, this world once had not existed and then it came into being. This idea is clearly established in the Qur'ānic statements, such as "And He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days' (11:7); "What! See they not up unto the heaven above them how We have made it and adorned it, no gaps are therein" (50:6); and "Created He the heavens and the earth with the truth; Exalted is He above what they associated (with Him)" (16:3). Yet the Qur'ān did not say anything about how this creation was undertaken, either *ex nihilo* or from pre-existent matter. Similarly, even supposing that the universe was created out of pre-existent matter, it remains unclear whether that pre-existent matter was created (ephemeral) or eternal. Nevertheless, Muslim theologians were in agreement upon the fact that the world was created *min al-maʿdūm*, "from the non-existent." Transmitting the term from Syrian Christians, Muslims, according to Wolfson, also accepted the traditional Christian interpretation of the term "non-existent" as signifying "nothing," or, in Arabic, *lā shay'*. Their acceptance of this idea was not only because it was in agreement with their belief in God's absolute power, but also because they found a support for it from a saying attributed to the Prophet, as narrated by al-Bukhārī, that "God existed and there was nothing with Him."[60]

This tradition, which is also in support of some equivalent Qur'ānic verses, such as "Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, they have no firm belief" (52:35-36), does not by itself necessarily mean creation *ex nihilo*, but it may only mean that God was the sole creator.[61] Likewise, when God says "To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. When He decreeth a matter He saith to it: 'Be' and it is' (2:117), the word *badīʿ* does

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reality. Thus, when God created the world, He gave those entities the accident of existence. For further discussion of *shay'* as a philosophical term, see R. Arnoldez, "Shay'" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 9, pp. 380-382; Jamīl Ṣalībā, *al-Muʿjam al-Falsafī* (Beirut and Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī and Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 712-713.

[60] The Ḥadīth is quoted in ibid., p. 363, from Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, ch.1, p. 302. Wolfson refers to the one edited by M. Ludolph Krehl and Th. W. Juynboll (Leiden, 1861-1908). For another edition, see Zayn al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Latīf al-Zabīdī, *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī (al-Tajrīd al-Ṣarīḥ)* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1986), p. 305.

[61] Wolfson, *ibid.*, p. 358.

not necessarily mean creator *ex nihilo*.[62] It was al-Jurjānī, as Wolfson notes, who first scrutinized the Qurʾānic use of the word "*khalaqa*" to indicate God's creation of human. But in fact this verb is also employed to describe God's creation of the heavens and the earth (10:4). It can be concluded, therefore, that while the early Muslims knew that creation meant opposition to eternity, they were not yet aware of the problem of whether creation was out of nothing or out of a pre-existent, formless matter. It is only later that their awareness as such appeared.[63]

According to al-Shahrastānī, as paraphrased by Wolfson, when the Muʿtazilites emerged in the early ninth century, they devoted themselves to the study of the works of the philosophers, through which they became acquainted with Plato's theory of the creation of the world out of pre-existent eternal matter, and with Aristotle's theory of the eternity of the world. They also learned from Aristotle that nothing can come out of the non-existent in an absolute sense; and that matter is not non-existent in an absolute sense. According to Aristotle, matter is only accidentally non-existent. It is not "nothing," but "something." Wolfson concludes that due to these influences, the Muʿtazilites were reluctant to accept the already established belief that the world was created out of nothing. Nevertheless, since Muslims

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[62] The verse, in its original text reads *"badīʿ al-samāwāt wa'l-ʿarḍ"* and is translated as above. Pickthall translates the word *badīʿ* as "the originator." But for Wolfson it also means "the creator." See Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An Explanatory Translation* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948), p. 38.

[63] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 359. The above discussion has showed us the difficulty in determining the idea of creation in Islam. This could be because the position of the Qurʾān on the meaning of creation is vague. On the one hand, there is the verse which implies creation of something pre-existent, such as "He comprehended in His design [*istawā*] the sky, and it had been (as) smoke" (41:10). Based on al-Zamakhsarī's interpretation, the pre-existent smoke itself was created, since the smoke proceeded from water under the throne of God, which had been created by God before the heaven and the earth. Similarly, Ibn Rushd, as also referred to by Wolfson, suggests that the verse means "the heaven was created from something," that is from something eternal (*Faṣl al-Maqāl*, vol. 2, pp. 6-7). On the other hand, some Qurʾānic verses (52:35-36, as quoted above), also indicate that the creation was *ex-nihilo*. However, the phrase *Am khuliqū min ghayri shay'* (were they created of nothing—as translated by ʿAbdullah Yūsuf ʿAlī) may also be taken to mean "were they created by nothing?" (Sale and Rodwell), or "were they created for no purpose" (Bell). With these last two interpretations, it does not necessarily mean that creation was *ex-nihilo*. A s has been cited above, it may only indicate that God was the sole creator. See ibid., p. 358. For a special discussion of the creation *ex nihilo*, see another work by Wolfson, "The Kalam Problem of Nonexistence and Saadia's Second Theory of Creation," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 36 (1945-1946), pp. 371-391.

were bound by the Qur'ānic doctrine that the world was created, they could not accept the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world. Yet they could not find any objection in the Qur'ān to the belief in a pre-existent eternal matter. Thus they accepted Plato's theory that the world was created out of a pre-existent eternal matter. In other words, while retaining the already established formula that the world was created *min al-maʿdūm*, the Muʿtazilites took the non-existent in the formula to refer to Plato's pre-existent matter, which, according to their interpretation, was a substrative matter or an emanated matter.[64]

Hanafi, after all, tried to introduce some other fundamental issues in Islamic theological thought that Nasution failed to do. His attempt to simplify the issue as an introduction for those who had just begun to learn Islamic theology on the academic level is of course, praiseworthy. Indeed, Hanafi's references are of considerable value, mostly consisting of Arabic works, such as Hana al-Fakhūrī's *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-ʿArabīyah* (1957-1958), Ibrāhīm Madkour's *Tārīkh al-Falsafah* (1948), T.J. de Boer's *Tārīkh al-Falsafah fī'l-Islām* (being a translation of his *The History of Philosophy in Islam*), in addition to Zuhdī Ḥasan Jār Allāh's *al-Muʿtazilah* (1947), an important work that Nasution failed to refer to in discussing Muʿtazilism. It is interesting to note that in discussing Islamic atomism, Hanafi also refers to Shlomo Pines' *Beitrage zur Islamischen Atomenlehre* (1936) in its Arabic translation, *Madhhab al-Dharrah ʿinda al-Muslimīn*,[65] and takes an important quotation from it. Unfortunately Hanafi did not mention any further information about this translation. He also fails to mention this work in his bibliography.[66]

Hanafi's work *Pengantar Theology Islam*, which was already in wide circulation prior to the appearance of Nasution's *Teologi Islam*, represents the second step in constructing a new theological literature in

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[64] Ibid., p. 364.

[65] Pines' work was only recently translated into English by Michael Schwarz, entitled *Studies in Islamic Atomism* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1997).

[66] However, the works referred to by Hanafi were published in 1940s and 1950s, which might be the only available resources for him in preparing this work. Nasution's resources, which cover some later publications (ranged from 1928 to 1965), are richer than those of Hanafi. Yet it must be kept in mind that although these works of Hanafi and Nasution are still in use as textbooks in Islamic theology, so far there has been no attempt to revise the contents of the books or to enrich them by consulting some newer publications.

Indonesian Islamic higher education, after that of the aforementioned Muʿin. Yet, as has been discussed previously, the book is not well prepared in a standard academic style, especially if one considers his use of endnotes and his bibliography. Nevertheless, his presentation is fairly good, and his approach to the subject matter is more developed than that of Muʿin. Nasution's work, which appeared last, supplies a more elaborate discussion and uses a more academic approach. Until the present, Nasution's works in theology, *Teologi Islam* and *Muhammad ʿAbduh dan Teologi Rasional Muʿtazilah*, are the only standard textbooks in Islamic theology for Islamic higher education in the country. Of course, there have been many other works for this purpose written by more recent scholars, many of whom are either direct or indirect disciples of Nasution. Yet the works of Nasution remain the predominant on the subject. It is not surprising, therefore, that the books are not only referred to by students of an undergraduate level but also are used as main references for some of those who write term papers for graduate courses as well as those who have written Ph.D. dissertations on Islamic theology.[67]

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[67] Dr. Muslim Nasution, currently the head of the Department of Philosophy at the Graduate Studies of IAIN Jakarta, expressed his regret that a number of graduate students at the IAINs felt secure whenever they correctly mentioned Nasution's works for their references, either for their term papers or for their thesis and dissertation. (Interview with Dr. Muslim Nasution, Jakarta, March 3, 1999). Of course, Harun Nasution did not mean that to happen. He even demanded that his students be able to explore the original sources both in English and Arabic themselves independently, and not only to duplicate his expertise. Thus he urged the students to master Arabic and English to a certain degree that enabled them to develop their academic skill and to broaden their own worldview. See Harun Nasution, "IAIN dan Pembinaan Ulama Abad XV Hijriyah" (Laporan Rektor IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1980), 9 July 1980, pp. 5-6. See also Deliar Noer, "Harun Nasution dan Perkembangan Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, p. 100. For the influence of Harun Nasution in academic writing among graduate students at the IAIN, see, for instance, M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir al-Azhar: Sebuah Telaah tentang Pemikiran Hamka dalam Teologi Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990). The work was originally a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate Studies, IAIN Jakarta. When Yusuf tried to examine Hamka's theological thought as reflected in his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, he selected a number of Qur'anic verses dealing with theological issues on the basis of Nasution's approach of classification in his *Teologi Islam*. To a lesser degree, a heavy reliance on Nasution's works also appears in Noer Iskandar al-Barsany's "Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan" (Ph.D. Thesis, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 1997). Al-Barsany was content to rely on Nasution's account of some issues that actually he should be able to refer to their original resources. More apparent influence of Nasution can be seen in H.M. Amin Nurdin and Afifi Fauzi Abbas (eds.), *Sejarah Pemikiran dalam Islam: Teologi/Ilmu Kalam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara & LSIK, 1996). The book is a compilation of fourteen papers

4. Retrospective

Finally, it is crucial to our discussion to provide a general overview of Nasution's contribution in developing Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. An interesting assessment about Nasution is courteously (and seemingly impartially) provided by Nurcholish Madjid in his "Abduhisme Pak Harun."[68] According to Madjid, Nasution has successfully instituted a new intellectual tradition among IAIN students. This is reflected in a general trend, because since that time, students have dared to speak out and discuss some "established' doctrines overtly. They ventured to reject the idea that a doctrine was something to be "taken for granted," a phraseology that Madjid favorably reiterates to reinforce the idea of renewal. Nasution also encouraged his students to re-examine doctrine in its historical context. All of these measures were taken by Nasution in order to develop the students' "learning capacity," an effort that nobody before him could have accomplished. Through this achievement, academic creativity at the IAIN flourished fervently.

The most influential outcome of Nasution's works was a new approach to teaching Islamic theology and philosophy. Especially in Islamic theology, in which Nasution made it easier for students to better learn about theological controversies, they were encouraged to re-examine the foundations of their religious belief. Islam has been adhered to by Muslims for more than fifteen hundred years, and thus Muslims should take this lengthy period of progress seriously. Much progress has been made, not only in doctrinal matters but also in cultural and social institutions. Madjid emphasizes that by considering all of these aspects of Islamic religious life, one could not claim that one should directly refer to the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth while ignoring the works of scholars in their attempt to interpret Islamic doctrines in accordance with the given social demands or historical and cultural realities. Otherwise, Madjid argues, one will rely only on the earliest and most rudimentary interpretation of the

originally written by Nasution's students at the IAIN Jakarta Graduate Studies who took Nasution's class in Islamic theology. Every single writer of these papers refers to Nasution's *Teologi Islam*, in addition to his *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, and *Muhammad 'Abduh dan Teologi Rasionalnya*. The *Sejarah Pemikiran Islam* is meant as a textbook in Islamic Theology for IAIN students throughout the country.

[68] See Nurcholish Madjid, "Abduhisme Pak Harun," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, pp. 102-110. The following discussion will be based on this article.

doctrines.[69] Through studying *kalām* (with a more developed approach like that introduced by Nasution), Muslims would learn better about doctrinal matters. Madjid takes as an example the Ashʿarite formulation of the twenty attributes of God which was not achieved through an easy process. It was a very tedious task and it took a long time before it was firmly established.[70] But more significantly, through studying *kalām*, Muslims would be more open to diversified brands of doctrinal Islam, and could voluntarily avoid an obstinate dogmatic stance. It is true that many people worried that by taking such a measure one may come to a conclusion that some doctrines are indeed relative, merely a product of the historical process. Madjid, however, insists that such an anxiety is not necessary, because people today have become more educated and more intelligent.[71]

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[69] This statement by Madjid seems to be intended as a criticism of the Modernist Muslims in the country who vigorously opposed blind imitation (*taqlīd*). He suggests that the campaign against the *taqlīd* should be undertaken carefully, since otherwise it will imply that people should reject all kinds of innovated cultures, and come back to the origin, which means to come back to zero. Quoting Hamka, Madjid insists that it is the blind imitation which should be avoided, but the "creative *taqlīd*" should be maintained. It is impossible to deny all kinds of innovation as the outcomes of modernity. Nevertheless, Muslims must be aware of the authenticity of their doctrines. Therefore, the best measure to be considered is "to maintain the good aspects of the past, and to adopt the best of the contemporary" (*al-muḥāfazat ʿalā al-qadīm al-ṣāliḥ wa'l-akhdh bi'l-jadīd al-aṣlaḥ*). See Madjid, "Aqidah Islam yang Perlu Dikembangkan Sebagai Landasan Pemikiran dan Amal Muhammadiyah," in Sujarwanto et al. (eds.), *Muhammadiyah dan Tantangan Masa Depan: Sebuah Dialog Intelektual* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1990), p. 417.

[70] An interesting discussion by Madjid on this issue can be seen in his *Tradisi Islam: Peran dan Fungsinya dalam Pembangunan di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), pp. 114-115. In this part of the book, Madjid insists that the science of *kalām*, as a rational and dialectical theology, could have protected Islamic doctrinal beliefs from the danger of Hellenistic subversion. It is in this sense that the Ashʿarite formulation of God's twenty attributes was deemed as an attempt to defend Islamic beliefs from the ruinous infiltration of philosophers. The philosophers, it is argued, perceived the existence of God in purely rational way, in line with their inclination toward Aristotelianism. It was due to Aristotelian influence that the philosophers refused God's attributes, which, ironically, was meant to defend the concept of God's absolute unity (*al-tawḥīd*). Had this Aristotelian influence not been suspended, God would have been regarded as having no existence, and the religion would have lost its function as the source of moral values. God would be perceived as merely equal to the laws of nature, without self-consciousness or personality.

[71] Such an anxiety, as has been noted in the earlier discussion, was clearly reflected by Rasyidi, especially in his *Koreksi Terhadap Dr. Harun Nasution* (1977). According to Deliar Noer, Nasution held a fundamentally different perspective in considering the contemporary Muslim condition. While Rasyidi was anxious and thus he took a careful measure in discussing the historical backgrounds of Islamic doctrines, Nasution was more confident that by exposing the students to those historical realities

With regard to Nasution's encouragement to maintain rationality in the religious life, Madjid explains that it is necessary to educate Muslims in order that they understand their religion more rationally. This, argues Madjid, would help people to eliminate a "cult tendency."[72] He insists that rationality predominates in the Qur'ānic appeal to belief. When the Qur'ān calls people to believe in God, it

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objectively, they would be able to make their own judgement independently, and would grow more mature. On the contrary, Rasyidi rejected this idea and insisted that such a measure would shock the belief of young Muslims, and would make them antipathetic toward Islam. This difference, according to Noer, was mainly due to their respective cultural backgrounds. Rasyidi was much involved in the reform movement promoted by the Muhammadiyah, and he grew up in a time when Muslims were in need of safeguarding their belief. On the other hand, since Nasution spent most of his youth abroad (in Arabia and Egypt, before he moved to Europe and finally to Canada), he was not in direct touch with the crucial problems faced by his fellow Muslims in the country. Thus he could free himself from some responsibilities experienced by Rasyidi and his colleagues. Nasution, therefore, with his Western academic training, believed that conditions were ripe enough for him to introduce a more "radical" approach in studying Islam to young Indonesian Muslims, a judgement that seems to be approved by Madjid. See Deliar Noer, "Harun Nasution dalam Perkembangan Pemikiran Islam," pp. 92-93.

[72] In Madjid's point of view, religiosity is not only a means to the fulfillment of psychological needs. Therefore, it must be established on rationality. If the religion is only meant to serve as the fulfillment of psychological needs, the cult may function better. This is in line with Willa Appel's study of cults in America, which reveals that cult teachings reinforce the techniques that produce an altered state of mind. In the cult, spirituality is presented as a goal diametrically opposed to rationality, which is condemned as an obstacle to true spiritual being. The whole point in the cult is to stay in the Kingdom of God through emotional prayers and repetitive chanting, which constitute a form of self-hypnosis. See Willa Appel, *Cults in America: Programmed for Paradise* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1983), p. 189. For a special discussion of cults by Madjid, see his *Islam Agama Peradaban: Membangun Makna dan Relevansi Doktrin Islam Dalam Sejarah* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), pp. 133-141. Madjid refers to the Children of God as an example of how the cult may satisfy psycho-religious needs. The Children of God is a Christian group founded by David Brandt Berg, known to his followers as Father David. Berg was critical of many establishment structures, including the organized church. He called for a total commitment to a "Jesus revolution," and began to attract the attention of street people. Many of those who responded his summon gave up drugs and followed him to live communally, calling themselves Teens of Christ. Berg was then referred to as Moses, and in early 1970 the group started to call themselves "Moses and the Children of God." Migrating with his group from one place to another, Berg continued to exercise his prophecy which was believed to originate from spirit entities. The most controversial practice of the group was the idea of "flirty fishing" which allowed sexual freedom among the members. Berg ordered the women of the group to use their natural sexual appeal and talents to gain new members, to become "hookers for Jesus." This practice was eventually abandoned, but only after it had been blown up by the mass media that made the image of the group extremely negative. See James R. Lewis, *Cults in America: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1998), pp. 86-87.

always also demands that they use their reason by summoning them with the words "*a-falā taʿqilūn?*" (do not you think?). In other words, belief must be established on the basis of rationality or reasoning. It does not mean that belief is to be determined by rationalism. Nevertheless, revelation must be reconsidered with a rational approach. By opening the gate to rationality in religious belief, Nasution, according to Madjid, has made a great breakthrough for developing a new theological discourse in Islamic academic life throughout the country. His obsession with introducing Muʿtazilism, or, borrowing Martin's words, to "reinterpret Muʿtazilism in the modern Indonesian context," bears two important messages: (1) Rationality, which leads Muslims to be open minded and thus ready to accept liberalism; and (2) an acknowledgement of human capacity in the sense of Qadarīyah ideas of free will. Time and again Nasution insisted that fatalism as a result of the people's adherence to Ashʿarite traditional theology has been the primary cause of Muslim inertia and backwardness.

Madjid reminds his readers that Islamic reform in Indonesia has been in progress for a very long time, since the establishment of the Muhammadiyah. However, like Nasution, Madjid suggests that this reform was confined to *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence, especially dealing with ritual practices, which are only of secondary importance. Accordingly, the Muhammadiyah is not too much different from its traditional counterpart, except in ritual practices, and they both retain a similar theological worldview.[73] This theological worldview, which deals with one's way of reasoning, does not get enough reconsideration from the Muhammadiyah. The supporters of the Muham-

[73] Madjid may have disregarded the theological reform undertaken by the Muhammadiyah as an important achievement. The Muhammadiyah, as has been discussed earlier, has made strenuous efforts to purify the religious beliefs and practices from some corrupted influences of local traditions, and to bring them closer to the pristine character of the religion, based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Yet, in Madjid's viewpoint, the Muhammadiyah theological thought remains in the Ashʿarite framework, similar to that of the traditionalists. Madjid suggests that, as an upholder of the necessity of *tajdīd* or the renewal of religious thought, the Muhammadiyah should keep up with ʿAbduh's ideas of reform, to which this movement has attached itself, by undertaking some necessary measures in developing the science of *kalām*. The doctrinal beliefs are not to be accepted as they are at face value, without questioning why. The Muhammadiyah, according to Madjid, did not pay much attention to this principal issue. Madjid, however, did not only criticize the Muhammadiyah for this deficiency, but also offered a number of suggestions for the enrichment of its theological perspective. See his "Amal Muhammadiyah: Menjawab Tantangan Pembangunan di Indonesia," in his *Tradisi Islam Peran dan Fungsinya dalam Pembangunan di Indonesia*, pp. 107-122.

madiyah are still obedient followers of Ashʿarism in theology, like the traditionalists. They do not adhere to ʿAbduh's theological thought although they claimed themselves to be supporters of his religious reforms. Madjid suggests that a more important and fundamental reform must be pursued in the way of reasoning, and not in *ad hoc* matters concerning ritual practices. "What is the difference," thus Madjid inquires, "between those who take the *qunūt* in their dawn prayer and those who ignore it? What kind of life style results from reciting the *qunūt* and ignoring it? It makes no difference at all."[74]

Therefore, reform should be implemented in terms of the fundamental way of reasoning, which is the essential subject matter discussed in theology. Concurring with Nasution, Madjid also suggests that modern people are more inclined to a Qadarīyah worldview, with its emphasis on rationality. It is true that this tendency may lead to anthropocentrism or even, more menacingly, to disbelief in God. But, if people are left to adopt fatalistic worldview promoted by the Jabrites, it will imply that they are allowed to ignore their social obligations. In this respect, Madjid insists, Nasution has tried to straighten the role played by the Muhammadiyah, including an endeavor to make Islam more beneficial for the solution of social problems. So far, Muslims feel sufficiently touched when they see other people willing to perform their daily prayers, but are less aware of the necessity to help the needy. Nasution has made Islam more functional, more than only a symbol of religious feeling and emotion.[75] Moreover, through his tireless effort to promote rational theology, he wanted to present Islam in a more moderate fashion; more open toward foreign civilizations, and not to be caught in the narrow confines of the issue of the *madhhab*. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that Islamic rationalism will never abandon revelation as an

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[74] The *qunūt* is a special invocation (*duʿā'*) recited during the dawn prayer (*ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ*) at the second *rakʿah*. Reciting this invocation is among ritual practices that differentiate the group identity between the traditionalists and the modernists (particularly between the NU and the Muhammadiyah). For the latter, this invocation is not an obligatory part of the prayer, and thus it should be ignored. For further discussion of the Muhammadiyah's position toward the *qunūt*, see Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (Yogyakarta: PP. Muhammadiyah Majlis Tarjih, 1976), pp. 366-369. Madjid is therefore in line with Nasution, who perceives that the reform that took place in Indonesia was confined to minor and derivative points (*al-masā'il al-furūʿīyah*), and did not touch the most fundamental ones. See Nasution, *Islam Rasional*, pp. 151-156.

[75] Madjid, "Abduhisme Pak Harun," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, p. 109.

instrumental measure of truth. Revelation remains a major source of truth, except that the scope for reason (*vis-à-vis* revelation) is to be broadened and the interpretation of revelation is to be presented in a more contextual and liberal manner.[76]

To sum up, Nasution has accomplished a great task that nobody before him was able to do. He has made many breakthroughs that allow young Muslims to enjoy the freedom of expression in their religious doctrines. Islam has been made widely open as an object of critical inquiry. It no longer remains merely a strict theological doctrine to be followed obediently. His appearance on the Islamic academic scene can be considered to be another reform in the field of theological thought. Therefore, it is understandable that his influence was profoundly felt among young scholars. Nasution was reported to have been deeply concerned with any forum of discussions held by his students, and happily attended them to give suggestions or guidance. He was more interested in attending those discussions than fulfilling other requests to present papers in seminars, both at home or abroad.[77] His appearance at such events was highly inspiring to people. But the most striking impression made by Nasution was his capacity to create new conditions in IAIN academic life, which allowed the students to maintain diversities of opinions and independence of mind. It was due to such condition of the freedom of thought that Muʿtazilism, which faded into oblivion and was considered an odious school of thought for a very long time, began to regain more consideration and even some admiration. Nasution, therefore, has emerged as a supporter of the advance of "neo-Muʿtazilism" in the contemporary Muslim world, "although most of those who are associated with this trend are quite intellectually independent of each other."[78]

One of Nasution's students in the 1970s suggests that the most appropriate epithet to be attributed to Nasution was that of a "reformer in theological thought."[79] His theological reform was estab-

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[76] See "Pintu Rasionalisme Harun Nasution," as quoted from *Tempo Interaktif*, No. 1/XXVII/1998, http://www.tempo.co.id. The idea is attributed to Komaruddin Hidayat, once a disciple of Nasution, as narrated by *Tempo*'s reporters in this short essay.

[77] Komaruddin Hiadayat, "Sebagai Guru Sekaligus Orang Tua," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, pp. 295-296.

[78] Richard C. Martin, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, pp. 18-19.

[79] Mansour Fakih, "Mencari Teologi untuk Kaum Tertindas (Khidmat dan

lished on the supposition that the backwardness of Muslims in Indonesia (and elsewhere) was due to "something wrong" in their theological thought. This idea is in congruence with that upheld by the reformers in the early twentieth century, like al-Afghānī, ʿAbduh, Rashīd Riḍā, and Ameer ʿAlī, who advocated the necessity of rediscovering the original spirit of Islam. Through this rhetoric, they suggested that Muslims' reliance on fatalistic and non-rational theology has been a primary cause of their backwardness. Therefore, in Nasution's point of view, if Muslims were anxious to improve their fate, they should replace their traditional theological thought with a rational theology, and maintain the doctrine of free will, as has been mentioned previously. Through his perseverance in advocating the necessity of adopting rational theology, Nasution is considered to have made a significant share in preparing young Muslims to be qualified to take part in the process of achieving national progress. To support this idea, Nasution encouraged his students to reinterpret the Qur'ān in accordance with the current situation and demands. Nasution has successfully implanted an understanding that they have the equal right to reinterpret the Qur'ān according to their era, like those of the classical exegetes who had done so for their own time.[80]

Nasution has provided something new to the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia. He not only sustained what had been in progress before, but also paved a new way for further advancement by giving more attention to the real achievements of classical Islam. Therefore, his concern was focused on developing the discourses of theology, philosophy, mysticism, modern development in Islam and, to a lesser degree, jurisprudence,[81] for IAIN students. Although Nasution's influence was limited to IAIN students and young intellectuals, his accomplishment was very apparent. Now it is very common

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Kritik untuk Guruku Prof. Harun Nasution)", in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, p. 167.

[80] Ibid., p. 168.

[81] Except in jurisprudence, Nasution has written a number of works. He seemed to be less interested in this subject matter, because, as reported by Sudirman Tebba, of his misconception that Islamic jurisprudence has been fixed, and that it needs no more dynamism. Nasution was more concerned with the dynamic and rational thought that would be found in theology, philosophy and mysticism. Thus he excluded, regretfully, Islamic jurisprudence from the pale of Islamic thought. See Sudirman Tebba, "Pembaharuan Hukum Islam: Mempertimbangkan Harun Nasution," in ibid., pp. 135-136.

to hear students discussing controversial issues, as it is also very common to see them pronouncing the ideas of reform and modernization. Nasution also emphasized that the advancement of science should not be hampered in the Islamic world. However, it gives the impression that in Nasution's point of view, all progress that took place in classical Islam could be used as a reference to ameliorate the condition of Muslims in the modern era.[82] This is one among other points over which his students and other scholars began to criticize him.

Yet, when his students (or other scholars) criticized Nasution, it only showed how successful he had been in educating his students. It also demonstrated that he had passed along to his students that they should maintain an independent mind. A number of criticisms directed to Nasution by his students deal either with his approach or the substance of the theological reform he had promoted. Nasution's theological thought was considered too barren and lacking reflection. He did not give special attention to the real social and cultural problems encountered by Indonesian Muslims. In addition, his thesis, that social and economic progress could be achieved through transforming theological thought, was seen as ahistorical. At least it needed to be proven empirically. This is one important thing that Nasution failed to ever consider till the end of his life.[83] On the other hand, in practical daily life, it is also difficult to prove that those who fully understand Muʿtazilism or believe in free will can more easily achieve progress in their worldly lives than those who uphold a fatalistic worldview. Similarly, there is no clear sign that those who adhered to Ashʿarite doctrines—as commonly found in Indonesia—were less successful in gaining progress in their life or less fortunate than those who claim to be upholders of rational theology.[84] The same idea is also held by Tamara who says "in reality, the traditionalists [who claim themselves to be upholders of the Ashʿarite theology] are very

[82] Deliar Noer, "Harun Nasution dalam Perkembangan Pemikiran Islam," in ibid., pp. 98-99.

[83] Fachry Ali and Taftazani, "Harun Nasution dan Tradisi Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia," in ibid., p. 122.

[84] Interview with Dr. Abuddin Nata, 22 January 2000. Dr. Abuddin Nata, currently a lecturer and vice- rector of the IAIN Jakarta, was a direct disciple of Nasution for several years. He was in Montreal as a visiting scholar to do some research under the auspices of the McGill-Indonesia Project, September 1999 to February 2000.

much aware of social problems and anxious for the well-being of society, modernisation, and development."[85]

But the most crucial criticism of Nasution comes from Mansour Fakih, another student of his. Fakih criticizes Nasution for his heavy reliance on rationality and his theological inclination to elitism. This is very much reminiscent of the Mu'tazilites during their heyday. At that time, rational theology was highly admired by elite scholars and became a symbol of their prestige, but was alienated from the majority of the common people. Similarly, the spirit of upholding an independent mind and maintaining diversified opinions demonstrated by the supporters of theological reform was too far apart from the real condition of the *ummah*. More significantly, insofar as Nasution's source of inspiration to develop his theological reform was rooted in the theory of modernity, his enterprise would not be firmly established.[86] It remains disputable, argues Fakih, whether or not the idea of theological reform is relevant to the necessity of social transformation. According to his point of view, Nasution's theological reform was trapped in the current dominant social, economic and political structures. So far, his theological reform has only successfully implanted a naïve consciousness among its supporters so that it was necessary for Muslims to transform their theological thought through education and other social institutions in order that they could be elevated into an "achieving society."[87] Thus poverty and other forms of misfortunes experienced by Muslims were merely seen as due to a theological misperception. Since the upholders of theological reform perceived the issue only from this point of view, they did not consider unjust social structures as a determining factor and as an object for scrutiny. They were only interested in creating Western modernity in the cloak of Islam, while ignoring the necessity

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[85] M. Natsir Tamara, *Indonesia in the Wake of Islam: 1965-1985* (Kuala Lumpur: ISIS, 1986), p. 3.

[86] Mansour Fakih, "Mencari Teologi untuk Kaum Tertindas," p. 168. For this criticism, Fakih refers to Alex Inkeles and David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[87] For an extensive discussion on the achieving society, as also referred to by Fakih, see David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (Princeton, New Jersey: D. van Nostrand, 1961). The achieving society is used to indicate "those societies which are developing more rapidly economically," in contrast to the "affluent society" which emphasizes slowing down production rather than speeding it up. See ibid., p. 63.

of examining the more fundamental grounds of the unjust social structure.[88]

In spite of his criticism, Fakih did not fail to recognize his indebtedness to Nasution, his "guru," as he acknowledged that he inherited from Nasution the spirit of critical inquiry and independence of mind. His attempt to introduce the concept of the theology of the oppressed is indeed a reflection and a response that emerged from the spirit inherited by Nasution, the spirit of maintaining diversified opinions.[89] It is also interesting to note that Fakih's attempt to introduce the theology of the oppressed was then supported by other younger scholars, such as Budhy Munawar-Rachman (b. 1963). In his short article "Menuju Suatu Teologi Yang Membebaskan" (Toward a Liberating Theology), Munawar-Rachman suggests that the oppressed have experienced injustices, both in economic and social lives. This is not, however, because they are lazy or less educated, or even because they have been predetermined by God to be so, but rather because they have been deprived of social preferences as a result of an unjust social structure.[90] Like Fakih, Munawar-

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[88] For a more complete examination on this issue, see Fakih, "Mencari Teologi Kaum Tertindas," especially in pp. 171-176. In this second half of the article, Fakih tries to discuss the possibility of finding another type of theology which is propitious in saving the majority of the *ummah* from their social and economic problems, that is "the theology of the oppressed." It is undeniable that his use of the term "Teologi Kaum Tertindas" (the theology of the oppressed) is reminiscent of Paulo Freire's work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1993), which first appeared in English in 1970. But Fakih is also influenced by the works of other scholars, such as Asghar Ali Engineer, Hasan Hanafi, and Ali Shariʿati. However, Fakih's discussion on this issue is not fully developed. Yet he seems to be serious in advancing this alternative theology for the further development of theological discourse in the country. In addition to the one discussed above, he wrote only a few articles on this issue, such as "Teologi untuk Kaum Tertindas," in Y.B. Mangunwijaya et at., *Spiritualitas Baru: Agama dan Aspirasi Rakyat* (Yogyakarta: Dian Interfidei, 1994); "Teologi yang Membebaskan: Kritik terhadap Developmentalisme," in *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 100-103; and "Teologi Bukan Soal Salah-Benar" (Interview), in *Ulumul Qur'an*, ibid., pp. 104-107. See also his "Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Pembebasan: Mempertegas Pemihakannya pada Kaum Dhu'afa," in M. Din Syamsuddin (ed.), *Muhammadiyah Kini & Esok* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), pp. 229-253. Fakih is more concerned with praxis by developing his idea of empowering "the oppressed" through his involvement in NGO activities. An interesting examination of Fakih's ideas can be seen in M. Agus Nuryatno, "Survey of Mansour Fakih's Theology of the Oppressed," a paper presented for the ICMI International Conference on "Good Governance: A Workable Solution for Indonesia?" held at McGill University, Montreal, 10-12 May, 1999.

[89] Mansour Fakih, "Mencari Teologi untuk Kaum Tertindas," p. 176.

[90] Budhy Munawar-Rachman, "Menuju Suatu Teologi Yang Membebaskan," in

Rachman did not fully develop his idea of Liberation Theology. It requires a more serious effort to formulate this issue in the Indonesian-Islamic context, an effort whose results many may have been waiting for. Unlike Nasution who has developed his discourse on Mu'tazilite rationalism quite exhaustively, the following younger scholars still need a more resolute foundation upon which to formulate their concept of an "alternative" theology. Yet, following Nasution's course, they have contributed greatly to the enrichment of theological discourse in Indonesia.

B. Nurcholish Madjid: Cultural Islam

1. His Cultural and Scholarly Background

Emerging in the late 1960s as the national leader of the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI—Muslim Students' Association), Nurcholish Madjid was considered one of the most influential chairmen of this student organization.[91] As a leading student activist of his time, he

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Ihsan Ali-Fauzi and Haidar Bagir (eds.), *Mencari Islam* (Jakarta: Formaci and Mizan, 1990), pp. 243-269. See also his "Agama sebagai Kritik Ideologi." *Prisma*, no. 3, vol. 20 (March 1991), pp. 60-65.

[91] Nurcholish Madjid was born in Jombang, East Java, March 17, 1939. Graduated from Pondok Modern Gontor, a famous modern *pesantren* in East Java in 1960 for his senior high school level, Madjid continued his education at the IAIN Jakarta, and completed his *doctorandus* degree in 1968. He gained his doctoral degree at the University of Chicago in 1984, with a thesis entitled "Ibn Taymīyah on *Kalām* and *Falsafah*." During his student days he was active in student organizations, and was appointed the national chairman of the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI—Muslim Students' Association) for two periods, 1966-1969 and 1969-1971. As a student activist, not only was Madjid well known among his fellow students in his home country but also widely known regionally and internationally. He was appointed the president of the Muslim Students Association of Southeast Asia (1967-1969), and the deputy secretary general of the International Islamic Federation of Students' Organization (IIFSO, 1969-1971). Writing many works, mostly in Indonesian, now Madjid is a head of Paramadina Foundation and a rector of ParamadinaMulya University, as well as a professor at the IAIN Jakarta. His short biography is available in almost every book written by him, especially those published by Paramadina. For an extensive discussion of his biography, see Siti Fathimah, "Modernism and the Contextualization of Islamic Doctrines: The Reform of Indonesian Islam Proposed by Nurcholish Madjid" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1999), pp. 8-48. For an interesting discussion on his influential role among the would-be intellectuals, see Fachry Ali, "Intelektual, Pengaruh Pemikiran dan Lingkungannya: Butir-butir Catatan untuk Nurcholish Madjid," an introductory remark to Madjid's *Dialog Keterbukaan: Artikulasi dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998), pp. xxi-lvii.

was highly successful in promoting idealism among his peers even while planting the seeds for a long-lived intellectual movement. This movement would be a "shock therapy" to Indonesian Muslims in regard to disconcerting conditions that surrounded them. The most significant contribution Madjid made to this student organization was his formulation of the HMI doctrinal guidelines, known as the *Nilai-nilai Dasar Perjuangan* (NDP—the Fundamental Values for Struggle).[92] Drafted in 1969, when Madjid held his first term as the national HMI chairman (1966-1969), the NDP serves as the "ideological manual,"[93] for instructing all participants in the leadership-cadre training of the association. As a doctrinal guideline, the NDP discusses the party's principal platform concerning beliefs, fundamental principles of humanity, human freedom and universal responsibility, social and economic justices, and the relationship between humanity and science.

Madjid's intellectual movement in the 1970s was known as the "Renewal Movement of Religious Thought" (Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Keagamaan). The emergence of this movement has been judged by many observers as the most radical development in Islamic religio-political thought in Indonesia to date. The intellectual significance of this movement lies in its attempt to reformulate, in general terms, the fundamental Islamic postulates regarding God, human and the world, and the manner of their relationships in the light

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[92] The draft of the *Nilai-nilai Dasar Perjuangan* was initially a work-paper presented at the 9th HMI National Congress at Malang, East Java (1969). But in its 15th National Congress at Padang, West Sumatra (1986), this doctrinal guideline was renamed *Nilai-nilai Identitas Kader* (NIK), with no substantial change from its early draft. See Pengurus Besar Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, *Nilai Identitas Kader* (Jakarta: PB HMI, 1986), p. 4. I have to thank to Dr. Abuddin Nata for allowing me to have a copy of this HMI doctrinal guideline.

[93] See Nurcholish Madjid, "The Issue of Modernization among Muslims in Indonesia: From a Participant's Point of View," in Gloria Davis (ed.), *What is Modern Indonesian Culture?* (Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1979), p. 150. Madjid admitted that he had been inspired to write this doctrinal guideline by three facts: (1) The absence of a comprehensive and systematic reading in Islamic ideology. He had been fully aware of this need during the Sukarno's era, known as the Old Order period, in which Muslims were in continuous ideological battle with the Communists and the Leftist-Nationalists. Muslims were badly in need of an ideological weapon to counter their provocative offense. (2) He envied the young Communists who were provided by the party with an ideological manual called *Pustaka Kecil Marksis* (PKM, Marxist Small Reader). (3) He was deeply impressed with Willy Eichler's booklet *Fundamental Values and Basic Demands of Democratic Socialism*, an ideological reformulation for the *Sozial-demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (German Social-Democratic Party, SDP) of West Germany. See, ibid.

of new political realities. It is as a result of this reformulation that Madjid was considered by Kamal Hassan as an accommodationist, an attitude to which Madjid has objected (see below). Nevertheless, his Renewal ideas reflected a more refined elaboration of a conception of Islam consonant with contemporary efforts toward Indonesian socio-political modernization. Cloaked in a nomenclature designed to convey the meaning of religious concepts in rational terms, the Renewal ideas were directed largely at addressing urban Muslim intelligentsia and students from a non-religious educational background who make up the majority of HMI's membership.[94]

Renewal ideas, which then came to be identified with HMI,[95] reflected the dilemma of those in the young Muslim generation of the time who were alienated due to the political strife of the *ummah* as well as to the unpopular image of Islam. Actually the emergence of the Renewal movement illustrated an identity crisis among Muslim intelligentsia at a time when loyalty to primordial ideology seemed to be in conflict with the goals of the ruling power. Madjid's formulation of Renewal could be seen as an attempt to resolve this inner tension. Madjid and his supporters agreed to share the aspirations of other elements of the newly emerging New Order; that is, the military forces, technocrats, and intellectuals, in order to realize the necessity of establishing a politically stable and modernized Indonesia. It was merely an honest attestation to the long and unfavorable conditions

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[94] Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Responses to "New Order" Modernization in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982), p. 189. Hassan found Madjid an "accommodationist" in the sense that he was willing to accommodate his ideas with the secular tendency of the New Order regime.

[95] The earliest document recording Madjid's Renewal ideas most likely is his "Keharusan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam dan Masalah Integrasi Umat" (The Necessity of Islamic Renewal Thought and the Problem of the Community Integration), a paper presented for *Silaturrahmi* or "congeniality gathering" organized by the HMI, Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII), Persatuan Sarjana Muslim Indonesia (Persami), and Gerakan Pemuda Islam (GPI), on 2 January 1970. For this presentation, see Madjid, "The Issue of Modernization," pp. 144-145. The paper is reprinted in Madjid's *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), pp. 204-214. In his inaugural speech as the chairman of HMI on the HMI's 23rd anniversary (5 February 1970), Madjid also presented a paper entitled "Menuju Pembaharuan Pemikiran dalam Islam" (Toward Renewal of Islamic Thought). For the complete text of this inaugural speech, see Agussalim Sitompul, *Pemikiran HMI dan Relevansinya dengan Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Aditya Media, 1997), pp. 159-165. In the tenth national congress of HMI at Palembang (October 1971), Madjid, with support from other top figures in the HMI, successfully made a major gain to endorse his Renewal ideas to be included as a part of HMI's future programs. See Hassan, ibid., p. 94.

when Utomo Danandjaja, one of Madjid's supporters, stated: "…. [W]e are fed up with wrestling endlessly with problems that are never solved. We want something new, something fresh, and a short cut to break the vicious circle that has no beginning and no end."[96] They felt that the path to a modern and progressive Indonesia was being obstructed, among other factors, by the unenlightened religious life style of Muslims. This was because some of their leaders were more concerned with politics rather than with the improvement of the economic life of the *ummah*. Thus, it was understandable that the advocates of the Renewal movement were in support of New Order development programs, which called for a reordering of priorities, the redefinition of political goals, and stimulating a mind-set conducive to national reconstruction and modernization.[97] It could be because of this "radical" accommodative stance that Madjid's Renewal ideas became subject to severe criticism, especially from older modernist Muslim scholars and some of his own peers, who were associated with a group categorized by Liddle as the Scripturalists.[98]

Madjid's Renewal ideas are also known as Islamic Neo-Modernism in Indonesia, a term coined by Fazlur Rahman, whose influential thought began to gain appreciation among Indonesian scholars in the 1980s.[99] According to Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, Neo-Modernism is a combination of the two important elements of Indonesian Islam, modernism and traditionalism. The presence of modernism cannot be denied. But, while accommodating the idea of

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[96] Hassan, ibid., p. 90. Danandjaja and his closest friend, Usep Fathuddin, were the main supporters of Madjid's renewal thought. Thus the three figures were known as the foremost articulators of renewal, nicknamed as *Pembaharuan Trio*. Hassan, ibid., p. 97.

[97] Hassan, ibid., p. 90.

[98] See, R. William Liddle, "*Media Dakwah* Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia," in his *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics* (Sidney: Asian Studies Association of Australia and Allen & Unwin, 1996), pp. 266-289.

[99] Greg Barton explicitly mentions that it is from Fazlur Rahman that the term neo-modernism comes. According to Barton, both Madjid's Renewal ideas and Rahman's Neo-Modernism are so similar that the use of Rahman's term to describe Madjid's Renewal ideas was easily acceptable. Barton insists, however, that Rahman was not the originator of the Indonesian Neo-Modernism. While Madjid's Renewal ideas (*Pembaharuan*) or Indonesian Neo-Modernism emerged as early as 1969, it was not until 1973 that Madjid and his peers knew anything about Rahman, when the latter visited Indonesia for the first time. See Greg Barton, "The International Context of the Emergence of Islamic Neo Modernism in Indonesia," in M.C. Ricklefs (ed.), *Islam in the Indonesian Social Context* (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1991), p. 81.

modernism, it does not necessarily mean that traditionalism is also to be rejected. In Neo-Modernism, these two different ideas can come together in a new synthesis. However, unlike modernism (represented by the Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam and other urban Islamic movements), Neo-Modernism is well-prepared to accept even the most advanced ideas upheld by the modernists, and, at the same time, to accommodate the ideas of the traditionalists. The emergence of Neo-Modernism was among the others a result of the failure of the modernists to maintain the efflorescence of their renewal thought when their movement increased in size, due to its abundant social and educational projects. Almost all of their strength was exhausted in running these social activities, leaving little opportunity to develop intellectual creativity. Moreover, the modernists' strict rejection of traditionalist thought led to a certain barrenness in their intellectual activities as well as to some rigidity in their ideas. On the other hand, the traditionalists, though more colorful and well-versed in the classical legacy, were deemed to be overly oriented to the past, and too observant in their selection of elements of modernism. Therefore, their intellectual dynamism grew only slowly. The emergence of Neo-Modernism was basically meant to reduce the cleavage between these two elements of Indonesian Islam and to combine their respective merits to the benefit of Muslims.[100]

Indonesian Islamic Neo-Modernism is to be distinguished from the earlier modernist movements, both in approach and essence. Like the modernist movements, however, the Neo-Modernist also supports the necessity of *ijtihād*. Though they use a new approach, their *ijtihād*, or hermeneutics, is indeed an extension of the one exercised by earlier modernists. In their new and unfettered approach to *ijtihād*, they combine both classical Islamic scholarship with modern or Western analytical methods. They could do so only because most of the advocates of this new movement came from a traditional Islamic educational background as well as from a modern Western style of education. They represent the first generation of Indonesian intellectuals to have enjoyed this multi-faceted type of education. In the past, the traditionalists were strongly discouraged from the curriculum of Western education. At the same time, relatively few modernists

[100] Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986), pp. 175-177.

had a good command of either literary Arabic or classical texts. It is in this respect that the term Neo-Modernism finds its appropriate nuance, as a means of delineating this intellectual movement and distinguishing it from both traditionalism and Islamic modernism. Yet the name Neo-Modernism also signifies its origin in the ideas of the earlier modernist movement.[101]

Stemming from this new attitude and approach to *ijtihād* and education, the Neo-Modernists are foremost non-sectarian. They also embrace the idea of pluralism in social life. They maintain that party-political activities employing the label of Islam are in fact counter productive for Muslims. Such activities only give rise to sectarianism, and therefore lead to unhealthy social interactions both among Muslims themselves, and among other groups on the national scale. The Neo-Modernist movement, however, is essentially religious in nature, and is primarily motivated by the necessity to achieve a level of progressive development in terms of Islam. The supporters of this movement are also deeply concerned with a consistent and universal methodology for Qurʾānic interpretation, while placing more emphasis on rationality and sensitivity to the historical and cultural contexts of both the Scripture and modern life. In the course of twenty-five years, Madjid and other intellectuals associated with this movement grew steadily mature in their manner of addressing national problems and issues relating to the Muslim *ummah*. In this regard, Madjid's formative works constitute an outstanding contribution to the growth of Muslim intellectualism, not only in Indonesia but also in the region of Southeast Asia.[102] Enriched with Western resources, in addition to his reputation in classical Islamic legacy, Madjid's works are directed to justify his conviction that "Islam is

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[101] Greg Barton, "Neo-Modernism: A Vital Synthesis of Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic Thought in Indonesia." *Studia Islamika*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1995), pp. 8-9. For another interesting discussion on Indonesian Islamic neo-modernism, see Budhy Munawar-Rachman, "Dari Tahapan Moral ke Periode Sejarah: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Islam di Indonesia." *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 4-29. In this lengthy article, Munawar-Rachman discusses the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia during the last 25 years (from the 1970s). The period has witnessed the flourishing of Islamic thought and the enrichment of its themes, which not only deal with political issues but also encompass cultural, theological and philosophical subjects. Munawar-Rachman's discussion of neo-modernism includes "Rational Islam," "Cultural Islam," and "Transformative Islam."

[102] Howard M. Federspiel, "Muslim Intellectuals in Southeast Asia." *Studia Islamika*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1999), p. 61.

a modern religion capable of providing guidance, which will allow Indonesia to assume a major role in the international community…"[103]

In general, the Neo-Modernist movement is characterized as a movement of thought combining progressive, liberal convictions alongside strong religious faith. Thus, the supporters of this movement establish their goals with approaches and attitudes that are positive, progressive and forward looking. They uphold the bold and hopeful conviction that the best is yet to come, and that the golden age lies not in the distant past, but in the near future. When their critics accused them of being opportunistic in terms of their reaction to New Order political expediency, they asserted that Islamic Neo-Modernism only represents a movement that has a different worldview from the old-style political behavior upheld by Masyumi or NU of the 1950s. Islamic Neo-Modernism is essentially a religious movement, and not an opportunistic reaction to political changes of the New Order Indonesia.[104]

After achieving his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago in 1984, Madjid soon joined the teaching staff at the IAIN Jakarta. Over time, he became a key figure in the process of reform at the IAIN, which had been originally initiated by Nasution. However, an old friend of his when he founded the Renewal Movement in 1970s, urged him to exert his influence more broadly upon Indonesian society. With this purpose in mind, Utomo Danandjaja, that old friend, together with some other activists, resolved to establish a socio-educational organization. Thus, in 1986, they established the Paramadina Foundation, which aimed at influencing Jakarta's middle classes and which would also work as a vehicle for disseminating Madjid's broader social ministry. At first, this newly established foundation was criticized for being narrowly focused on dealing with the middle and upper classes of *abangan* or non-*santri* citizens of Jakarta. However, its strategy has been proven to be greatly successful in terms of broadening the influence of Islamic teachings on the elite classes, and to deepen the faith of the urban elite.[105] Its efforts are

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[103] Howard M. Federspiel, "Contemporary Southeast Asian Muslim Intellectuals: An Examination of the Sources for their Concepts and Intellectual Constructs." Paper presented for the First International Conference on Islam and the 21st Century. University of Leiden, the Netherlands, May 1996, p. 13.

[104] Greg Barton, "Neo-Modernism: A Vital Synthesis," pp. 9-10.

[105] Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class. " *Indonesia*, no. 56 (1993), p. 16. The Paramadina runs

undeniably fruitful in turning the urban *abangan* business people, professionals, civil servants and students toward a stronger religious faith, a deeper knowledge of Islam and a more progressive outlook on the role of religion in society. The Paramadina, with this strategy and its particular approach, can be considered to function as a *pesantren* or *madrasah* on the basis of the late twentieth century models.[106]

Being an industrious writer, Madjid, to a certain degree, can be considered a "generalist" with regard to Islamic religious thought. His broad perspective on Islam, however, combined with his acquaintance with basic principles of sociology as well as of political science, has allowed him to raise the intellectual level of Muslim discourse in Indonesia. His fields of concern include very broad aspects of Islamic doctrinal matters; namely philosophy, history, institutions and contemporary development.[107] It is by no means that his works are

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a regular schedule of public lectures, study cells and weekend seminar programs, from which a series of publications has resulted in a number of books published under the banner of this foundation.

[106] Greg Barton, "Indonesia's Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual '*Ulama*': The meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought." *Studia Islamika*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1997), pp. 50-51. The Paramadina Foundation is a religious institution which consciously attempts at seeking a parallel relationship between "Islam-ness' and "Indonesian-ness," as a manifestation of universal values of Islam with Indonesian local traditions. The foundation is designed to be a center of religious activities which are creative and constructive, giving a positive support to social progress and avoiding defensive and reactionary attitudes. Therefore, its main programs are directed toward enhancing the capability of human resources, in response to the current challenges and in making significant contributions to the advancement of intellectual traditions. Now, in association with another institution, the Pondok Mulia, Paramadina has become a university, called ParamadinaMulya University, and Madjid becomes its first principal. For further detail of this university, visit its home page: http://www.paramadina.ac.id. This foundation also publishes collections of articles originating from its seminar sessions. Madjid, as the chairman of the foundation, dominates this publication. His works published by the Paramadina include: *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanuasiaan dan Kemodernan* (1992); *Pintu-pintu Menuju Tuhan* (1994); *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan: Membangun Tradisi dan Visi Baru Islam Idonesia* (1995); *Islam Agama Peradaban* (1995); *Kaki Langit Peradaban Islam* (1997); *Tradisi Islam, Peran dan Fungsinya dalam Pembangunan di Indonesia* (1997); *Masyarakat Religius* (1997); *Perjalanan Religius: Umrah dan Haji* (1997); *Bilik-bilik Pesantren* (1997); *Dialog Keterbukaan: Artikulasi Nilai Islam dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (1998), and *Cita-Cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi* (1999).

[107] Madjid commenced his study at Chicago in political science, which he believed to be very instrumental for his academic career. But, subsequently, he turned to Islamic thought which was more captivating and whose values were more intrinsic for him. Thus he finally wrote his Ph.D. thesis on the theological and philosophical thought of Ibn Taymīyah (1984). He was attracted to work on Ibn Taymīyah because of the latter's influential role as the doctrinal forefather for Islamic reform movements,

less thoughtfully written. Some of his discussions are even considered to be too tough, sophisticated and too abstract, especially by those who do not have enough basic knowledge of Islamic doctrinal principles, or are less familiar with his theological approach.[108] Overall, his approach is characterized by the fact that it is based on the idea of religious pluralism, inclusiveness, tolerance, mutual respect (among diversified religious beliefs), and political relativism.[109] However, he is not only an industrious writer, but also an eloquent articulator of subtle doctrines of Islam *vis-à-vis* contemporary challenges, at least in the Indonesian context. Since his early career as a student activist, he has shown his talent as a keen writer, and as having a deep concern with the issue of how Islam could deal with the problems of nationalism, modernization, secularization, industrialization and capitalism, as well as social justice.

2. To Put Islam in an Agreeable Position

Among the most significant concerns Madjid has put forth, in keeping with his perception of Indonesian Islam, deals with how Muslims may implement their religious doctrines properly in their home country. Madjid insists that in order to be able to implement Islamic teachings properly, Muslims should obtain a correct understanding of their religious doctrines, and have a good understanding of the environ-

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both the fundamentalist and liberal types. Yet, as a brilliant scholar with a great intellectual talent, he was less understood by contemporary Muslims, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, Madjid can be regarded as the first articulator of Ibn Taymīyah's thought in Indonesia in a serious sense. See *Tidak Ada Negara Islam: Surat-surat Politik Nurcholish Madjid—Mohamad Roem* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1997, pp. 12-13.

[108] Liddle, for instance, reports that it will be too much to expect that Madjid's theological thoughts can be easily understood by the common audiences of non-urban Muslims. More precisely, Liddle states: "It is probably too much to expect that a high percentage of village people would even understand, let alone be attracted to, the ideas of Nurcholish Madjid and friends. These ideas are, after all, sophisticated, abstract, and rather far from the direct personal religious experience of most villagers." See his *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics*, p. 280. To a certain degree it also causes some difficulties for those who attend Madjid's regular courses at the Paramadina seminar series. Accordingly, they demand that his materials be simplified or a tutor be appointed to give them more easily comprehensible elaboration of his courses. Interview with Dr. Abuddin Nata, 22 January 2000. Nata was one among those who were assigned to give such a tutorial.

[109] Nurcholish Madjid, *Dialog Keterbukaan: Artikulasi Nilai Islam dalam Wacana Sosial Politik Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Paramadina: 1998), p. 210.

ment where they will apply their religion; that is, Indonesia.[110] Madjid has clearly formulated this idea in his concept of cultural Islam, "an Islam whose primary role in the life of the nation is to serve as a source of ethical and cultural guidance,"[111] an idea that underlies his perceiving of Islam in Indonesia. It is also within this context that his controversial catchwords "Islam yes, Islamic party no," "desacralization" and "secularization," popularly reiterated on many different occasions in the early 1970s, can be properly understood. In spite of their controversial nature, in fact, these catchwords were meant to provide Indonesian Muslims with a theological basis, in order to deal with the problem of "split personality" commonly experienced by Muslims caught between accepting Pancasila as an ideology and being a devout Muslim.[112] They realized that as Muslims and citizens of the state they should actively participate in the process of social transformation, which is felt to be a categorical demand of the epoch. It is not surprising, therefore, that Madjid's ideas, though secretly, had considerable support from the intellectuals, at the same time as his audiences also grew broader.[113] "Secularization" as a natural effect of the process of modernization, has, to a certain degree, led to the decreased importance of the role traditionally played by religious institutions. Since the new religious zeal also emerged in line with the process of modernization, secularization could finally obtain its approval therein. Religious aspirations now found a new means to be reinvigorated through the process of modernization, in which scientific and empirical approaches could also be applied to reinterpret the universal message of Islam to the benefit of Muslims' social and cultural life.[114]

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[110] Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan dan Kemodernan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1992), p. lxvii; idem, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan: Membangun Tradisi dan Visi Baru Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. xviii.

[111] Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society," p. 4.

[112] M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Islam dan Modernisasi: Catatan Paham Sekularisme Nurcholish Madjid," introductory remarks to Madjid's *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 30.

[113] Sudirman Tebba, *Islam Orde Baru: Perubahan Politik dan Keagamaan* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1993), p. 148.

[114] Rahardjo, ibid., p. 31. "Islam yes, Islamic party no" is a phrase first introduced by Madjid early in 1970. The statement was actually a response to his own rhetorical inquiry: "To what extent were Muslims interested in (supporting) the existence of Islamic parties?" "Nothing," Madjid asserted. "Islamic parties could not serve as vehicles for striving the ideals of Islam. Moreover, the ideals of Islam upheld by those

Madjid was deeply disappointed with the performance of Islamic political parties in that era. To his mind, they were only occupied with the issue of how to gain more votes from the traditionally Muslim based constituents. They failed, however, to understand the real demands of the people, and mostly ignored some urgent issues that had to be addressed. Madjid mentions that none of these parties paid serious attention to the issues of social justice, clean government, corruption, freedom of expression and human rights. But the most menacing problem was that many political figures used Islam as merely a means for fulfilling their political ambitions. They did this by using religious symbols to accumulate mass support.[115] It has been obviously an abuse of Islam itself, since through their political campaigns the concept of Islam was drastically altered, as they stated that to be a real Muslim means equally to join a certain Islamic political party. Madjid disagreed that adherence to Islam should be confined to political affiliation. He insisted that Islam must be the possession of any person, regardless of his or her political aspiration. Insofar as Islam is narrowly occupied with political interests, it will not be a universal religion for everybody.[116] Therefore, according

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Islamic political parties were not any more captivating. They were obsolete, fossilized, and losing their internal dynamism." See Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 204-205. For further discussion of Madjid's idea on secularization and modernization, see M. Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order,"* pp. 92-94; Robert W. Hefner, "Secularization and Citizenship in Muslim Indonesia," in Paul Heelas (ed.), *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 147-168; Fathimah, "Modernization and the Contextualization of Islamic Doctrines," pp. 49-94.

[115] Even E. Saifuddin Anshari, Madjid's main critic in the 1970s, indicated that indeed many of Muslim political leaders, having achieved a prominent position in the party and gained luxurious facilities (for their status as a member of parliament) began to forget not only about Islam but also about the party they represented. See his *Kritik atas Faham dan Gerakan "Pembaharuan" Drs. Nurcholish Madjid* (Bandung: Bulan Sabit, 1973). Federspiel, with reference to Madjid's article in *Mizan* (1984), points out that Madjid's disappointment with Islamic political parties was partly due to their lack of unity, good leadership and clear direction. Like other intellectuals, Madjid was critical of the ineffectiveness of the Muslim community in gaining political goals and losing initiative to the military and state administrators. Yet, it must be kept in mind that the poor performance of Islamic political parties was also because the New Order regime had placed severe stricture on the use of religion as rallying point for political goals. See Federspiel, "Muslim Intellectuals and Indonesia's National Development." *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 3 (March 1991), pp. 243-244. For Madjid's article referred to by Federspiel, see "Islam in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities." *Mizan*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1984), pp. 71-85.

[116] Madjid's point of view seems to be in line with that maintained by Alamsjah Ratuperwiranegara, once a minister of Religious Affairs and a close aide of Suharto. Alamsjah insists that Islam should not be the monopoly of a single group. Muslims,

to Madjid, Islam must be freed from becoming a political ideology, as otherwise it will be restricted and left with little space to express its existence.[117] Islam must be in the possession of the whole nation, by virtue of which it will further develop, with a considerable freedom to implement its doctrinal teachings. Accordingly, this idea will be fulfilled if Muslims are concerned with the necessity of adopting a cultural approach to spreading Islam, instead of a political one.[118]

Based on this perspective, Madjid did not agree with the idea that his statement "Islam yes, Islamic party no" is in keeping with the process of accommodation along the line of the interests of the New Order's power holders. It is true that the statement, to a certain degree, might imply the notion of de-politicizing Islam sanctioned by the government officials. Yet in Madjid's interpretation, it may be seen as a simile: a person who manages to make a long forward leap, has to take several steps backward to start so that he can leap even further. Madjid argues that his policy as such was meant to

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therefore, may join any political party (especially when there was no single political party took a religious belief as its ideological basis), through which they could work for the benefit of Islam, wherever they existed. Moreover, some intellectuals, though they approved that Muslims had a religious duty to translate their doctrinal beliefs into political reality, did not agree that Muslims were obliged to vote for parties with the banner of Islam. It goes without saying that in a large extent, this attitude and political perspective reflected their recognition of the poor state of Islamic political organizations, which made them a bad electoral choice. On the other hand, it also implies that individual Muslims were justified, or even compelled to vote for the government-sponsored political party, the GOLKAR. Through this government party, it was argued, Muslims were still allowed to work for Islamic ideals. See, Howard M. Federspiel, *Indonesia in Transition: Muslim Intellectuals and National Development* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1998), pp. 107-108.

[117] Another assessment of this issue is also provided by Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, in their *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*. They suggest that Islam is not [identical with] an ideology. Identifying Islam with an ideology will imply that Islam is only a relative entity. While Islam is universal, they argue, ideology is determined by time and space. See *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, p. 178.

[118] Nurcholish Madjid, "Islam Indonesia Masih Simbolis." *Ummat*, vol. 1, no. 17 (February 19, 1996), as reprinted in Sabaruddin Amrullah and Viva Yoga Mauladi (eds.), *HMI Dalam Sorotan Pers* (Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, 1997), p. 419. The same idea is also noted by Adam Schwarz that Islam in Indonesia, according to Madjid, "should be understood as Indonesian Islam, by which he means that Islamic values and Indonesian values should be seen as inseparable parts of the same societal fabric. He cautions against viewing any individual Islamic group as the exclusive source of the truth and encourages Muslims to be tolerant of different religious practices." See Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s* (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994), p. 180. See also A. Makmur Makka and Dhuroruddin Mashad, *ICMI: Dinamika Politik Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Cidesindo, 1997), p. 21.

produce what he calls as the process of "identification;" that is, to make Islam "identical" with the Indonesian-ness, or Indonesian national identity. In other words, when Islam is successfully freed from any formal association with political parties, it will be in the possession of the whole nation, and thus it will be an identity of the nation. Then any person may freely identify him- or herself as a Muslim without being troubled with the necessity of associating him- or herself with Islamic political parties. Thus Indonesian-ness should be identical with Islam-ness, or at least constitute the majority of its elements, because Muslims represent the majority of the country's population.[119] Therefore, the amicable attitude of the government policy toward Muslims must be perceived as a positive consideration and should not be regarded as a co-optation. Madjid insists that this process of "identification" would hardly happen if the Islamic political parties retained their inimical measure as they had exercised up to mid-1980s. Today, when the process of "identification" is in progress, every Muslim should work hard in order to implement Islam's fundamental doctrines more extensively in daily life. Madjid, on the basis of this idea too, insists that it is more necessary to maintain substantial Islam rather than the formalistic Islam that takes on the forms of exaggerated symbolism, as seen mainly in politics. Therefore, upholding substantial Islam would help Muslims maintain the broader opportunities to promote a clean government,[120] while liberating them from unnecessary suspicion of the power holders.

Madjid's movement, therefore, can be characterized as substantialist, in contrast to scripturalist, whose emergence marked a period of great creativity in modern Indonesian Islam. R. William Liddle has made this term more widely known to Western academic circles through his publication of "*Media Dakwah* Scripturalist: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia," as noted previously. As an idea and approach, the substantialists, according to Liddle, held considerable promise for the revitalization of the *ummah*—an issue that created long term tensions over the nature of the relationship between Islam and the state. It also tried to extend more mutually tolerant relations with Christians and other non-Muslims. More significantly, substantialist ideas have been widely

[119] Madjid, ibid. See also Budhy Munawar-Rachman, in his preface to Madjid's work *Cita-cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), p. xv.

[120] Madjid, "Islam Indonesia Masih Simbolis," ibid.

disseminated within and outside Indonesia, thanks to the publications of national news media, which have helped greatly to increase their impact on the *ummah*.[121]

In general, the substantialist perspective can be characterized by the manner in which it upholds four interrelated ideas:[122] (1) The substance or content of belief and practice is more important than the form, in the sense that literal adherence to Qurʾānic injunctions is less positively valued than behaving morally and ethically in accordance with the spirit of the Qurʾān. (2) The message of the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, while conveying an eternal and universal meaning, is necessarily to be reinterpreted by every subsequent generation of Muslims, in the light of the social conditions prevailing in their time. It was argued that the socio-political, economic and cultural conditions in which most Muslims today live are vastly different from that of the Arabia at the time of the Prophet. (3) Since it is impossible for any person to claim with certainty that he can achieve an absolutely true understanding of the will and commands of God, Muslims must be tolerant toward each other, and even toward non-Muslims. Some supporters of substantialist ideas, therefore, have begun to re-examine some other means of classical Islamic thought, including Shiʿism and other Islamic traditions outside modernism; while others have tried to develop forums of dialogue with Christians.[123] (4) The advocates

[121] Liddle, *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics*, p. 267. The most instrumental news media for disseminating Madjid's ideas since the 1970s is the weekly news magazine, *Tempo*. According to one of its senior redactors, Suʿbah Asa, *Tempo* is the first news magazine in Indonesia that gives special attention to religious affairs as a feasible source of news media coverage. With its intellectual visionary character, *Tempo* found Madjid to be a promising figure worthy of more extensive coverage. Thus, *Tempo* deserves special credit for Madjid's increasing fame and greatness. Through its intensive coverage and exposure, Madjid's ideas of renewal and neo-modernism got a broader acceptance from many segments of readers nationwide and beyond. His striking ideas have frequently received special exposure as the *Tempo*'s cover stories: May 1971, April 1972, July 1972, December 1972, January 1973, June 1986, and April 1993. See M. Deden Ridwan, "*Tempo* dan Gerakan Neo-Modernisme." *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 50-61; Agus Wahid, "Cak Nur dan *Tempo*." *Ulumul Qur'an*, ibid., pp. 52-55. "Cak Nur" is a popular nickname of Nurcholish Madjid, by which his audience affectionately addresses him. Madjid, of course, also gets wide coverage from many other news media, including the national TV stations. His *Dialog Keterbukaan* (1998) and *Pintu-pintu Menuju Tuhan* (1994) are only two examples of how that coverage made by news media is documented in a book.

[122] Liddle, ibid., p. 75.

[123] The best example for this issue may be referred to Interfidei/DIAN (Institute for Inter-Faith Dialog in Indonesia/Dialog antar-Iman di Indonesia)

of this idea accepted the current structure of government as the final form of the Indonesian State, especially dealing with its constitution and foundation. They approved of the fact that elements of Pancasila, serving as the ideological and philosophical foundation of the state, are in conformity with the principal doctrines of Islam. In brief, with this final point, they agreed that the Qur'ān does not describe or mention any particular form of Islamic state to be established by the Muslim community. "There is no absolute form of an Islamic state, as there is no clearly definable Islamic political program for which all good Muslims must struggle."[124] They also upheld that the Islamic law is not necessarily to be turned into positive law, and that any Indonesian constitution must accept the full legal and political rights of non-Muslims.[125]

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of Yogyakarta. This institute specifies itself in an interfaith dialogue, but without a claim of supporting any particular religion. It pays respect to all legacies of religious thought, and gives a high appreciation to any form of religious tradition and its distinctiveness. Therefore, the Institute does not associate itself with a certain theological school; it is a forum in which all religious belief systems are impartially put as a subject of dialogue, to stimulate the flourishing of new ideas dealing with humanity, peace, and common wellbeing. In this Institute, many scholars of different religious affiliations are involved, as reflected in the Institute's annual publications. Among Muslim scholars taking part in this interfaith dialogue forum are Abdurrahman Wahid, Djohan Effendi, Emha Ainun Nadjib, M. Amin Abdullah, Mansour Fakih, Masdar F. Mas'udi, and several others. Their contributions to the dialogue have appeared in the serial publications of the Institute, such as *Dialog: Kritik & Identitas Agama* (1993), *Spiritualitas Baru: Agama dan Aspirasi Rakyat* (1994), *Pergulatan Mencari Jati Diri: Konfusianisme di Indonesia* (with a preface by Abdurrahman Wahid, 1995), and *Di Tengah Hentakan Gelombang: Agama dan Keluarga dalam Tantangan Masa Depan* (1997). See also Komaruddin Hidayat and Ahmad Gaus (eds.), *Passing Over: Melintasi Batas Agama* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1998).

[124] Liddle, *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics*, p. 75. For an interesting elaboration of Madjid's idea on this issue, see *Tidak Ada Negara Islam*, supra, n. 107; For another comprehensive examination on the idea of Islam and state in the Indonesian context, see Zifirdaus Adnan, "Islamic Religion: Yes, Islamic (Political) Ideology: No! Islam and the State in Indonesia," in Arief Budiman (ed.), *State and Civil Society in Indonesia* (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), pp. 441-477. Adnan insists that the idea of establishing an Islamic state was not only rejected by the secular-nationalists or *abangan* group but also by some pious Muslim leaders, including Munawwir Sjadzali, Muhammad Hatta, Alamsjah Ratuperwiranegara, and Fuad Hassan. See ibid., p. 445-446.

[125] Liddle, ibid., pp. 268. An interesting examination on this issue is provided by Federspiel in his "Islamic Values, Law and Expectations in Contemporary Indonesia," in *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 5, no. 1 (February 1998), pp. 90-117. According to Federspiel, in the eyes of substantialists, "Islamic law is viewed as a means of regulating Muslim contemporary life, relying on contemporary development suitable to the needs of Muslims in a given cultural area. For many, such law could easily be national law itself, so long as Islamic standards are used in constructing the law.

Madjid's ideas of cultural Islam has given a new impetus to further the development of Islam in Indonesia and has created a conducive environment for the emergence of a new image of Islam. Its emergence in the 1980s was regarded by some scholars as an antithesis to the idea held by militant Muslims, that "Islam out of power must be incomplete," or "Muslims who do not continually struggle to realize an Islamic state are untrue to Islam." They further insisted that Islam and politics are inseparable. But after years of political defeats, in terms of constitutional, physical, electoral, bureaucratic and symbolic matters, Indonesian Muslims began to realize that they had to turn their attention from a purely political struggle. Accordingly, they decided not to spend all the energies they had exhaustively in politics, and thus tried to cultivate a broader, non-political dimension of Islam. This may represent their conscious attempt to turn inward, away from political rivalry, both with their own Muslim fellows belonging to different political associations or with outsiders, in order to raise the religious and social consciousness of their *ummah*. With this assessment, Islam in Indonesia hopes to flourish culturally and spiritually, in spite of its political disappointment. Moreover, by emphasizing the cultural strength of Islam and by reaffirming the religious piety of its adherents, a more sympathetic and religiously substantive Islam is expected to be easily materialized. Thus Islam would be able to play its own significant role in the modern world. On the other hand, cultural Islam is also meant to serve as an instrumental medium to lessen the strife of the tumultuous years of political suspicions between Islam and the state. In addition, for the power holders, cultural Islam is of course more agreeable, since it constitutes an essential feature to maintaining the New Order's anticommunist self-definition. It is fairly reasonable, therefore, to assume that this is the principal consideration adopted by the regime to offer concessions to Muslims all over the following decade.[126]

Several writers … have suggested that the development of Indonesia's current legal system qualifies as "Islamic" since it was developed by Muslims who were simply following a secular approach, but still used Islamic principles in structuring the system." See ibid., pp. 102-103. For more comprehensive examination of the position of Islamic law in Indonesian legal system, see M. B. Hooker, *Islamic Law in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 248-278.

[126] See Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1994), pp. 47-49. Effendy based his examination mainly on the works of Donald K. Emmerson, "Islam in Modern Indonesia: Political Impasse, Cultural Opportunity,"

3. Indonesian Islam and the Idea of Egalitarianism and Pluralism

In an article written in the mid-1980s, Madjid began his presentation with a long quotation from Robert N. Bellah in his work *Beyond Belief* (1976). Bellah insists that the classical Muslim community was "modern" in the sense that it was open and democratic, and allowed any member of the community to participate in designing its general policy, as well as in its leadership. However, this modern and democratic "state" soon came to an end when the Umayyad dynasty seized power. This, according to Bellah, has been regarded as a great failure of the initial experiment of constructing an ideal Islamic state, due to the lack of any infrastructure to support the necessary principles of modernity.[127] Under the Umayyads, the democratic Islamic state turned into an exclusive-authoritarian state. Based on this historical fact, Madjid suggests that what really happened in Indonesia was a reflection of that particular failure in the remote past. There has been always a deep cleavage between the ideal concept of community life as dictated in doctrinal Islam and the reality of today's (Indonesian) Islsamic community. But, according to Madjid, the determining factor that caused Indonesian Islam to be as such was the fact that Islam first came to Indonesia centuries after it had experienced a dramatic failure (in its cradle nucleus) with the emergence of the Umayyad dynasty, and then the subsequent devastation of Baghdad by the Mongol invasion several centuries later.[128]

In conformity with Bellah's insight, Madjid also suggests that Islam came to Indonesia after the process of a heavy acculturation with

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in Phillip H. Stoddard, David C. Cuthell and Margaret W. Sullivan (eds.), *Change and the Muslim World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981), pp. 159-168; and "Islam and Regime in Indonesia: Who's Coopting Whom?" a paper presented for the American Political Science Association annual meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, 31 August 1989. The work by Effendy has been translated into Indonesian and published by Paramadina: *Islam dan Negara: Transformasi Pemikiran dan Praktik Politik Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1998). In this Indonesian version, the above discussion can be referred to pp. 45-47.

[127] Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 150-151. In Madjid's work see *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, pp. 62-63. See also his *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan*, pp. 14-15, in which the same quotation from Bellah also appears in Indonesian translation. In addition, in this latter work, Madjid also refers to Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 7, explaining how the Islamic concept of monotheism has been the most suitable foundation to support the idea of modernity.

[128] Madjid, *Islam, Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 64.

some elements of Persian or, more precisely, Aryan legacy. Most of what is known today as the so-called "Islamic culture" is actually a combination of various cultural constituents, drawn from the Irano-Semitic cultural legacy. Some of these elements, according to Madjid, must be condemned as contributing to polluting the "modern" principles of classical Islam. That is especially evident in the formation of a hierarchical social system in Islam, as inherited by the Umayyads and further perpetuated by the Abbasid dynasty. Therefore, the hierarchical social system prevalent in Indonesian Islam, apparent in the present non-egalitarian society today, is due to the above-mentioned historical factor. On the other hand, the stratified social system maintained by the Muslim community in Indonesia was also due to the influence of indigenous and local culture which had been dominant prior to the advance of Aryan culture through Hinduism and Buddhism. This tendency was also supported by the fact that Islam was spread to Indonesia through the way of *penetration pacifique*. In this peaceful penetration, Islam did not come to Indonesia with military forces as had happened in other parts of the Muslim world, but by way of acculturation. Islam in Indonesia, therefore, had to accommodate itself to some elements of local culture, which, to a certain degree, caused a great cleavage between the Islam practiced in the country and that admitted as the true norms of doctrinal Islam. This cleavage became the subject of an *ad hoc* reform undertaken by the Paderi movement in the West Sumatra, the Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam and al-Irsyad.[129]

Madjid points out that Islam was brought to Indonesia by the Sufis, which allowed it to make compromises with many elements of local culture. The great extent of the compromise between Islamic doctrines and the elements of local culture gives us a clear impression of why Indonesia only holds a "peripheral" position in the Muslim

[129] Ibid. Anderson, in line with this idea, insists that the penetration of Islam to Java was more assimilative than revolutionary. This non-revolutionary penetration of Islam was due to the fact that Islam came to Java "on the heels not of conquest but of trade." After its initial triumphs along the coastal areas, the devout Muslims were more or less absorbed into patrimonial states of the Javanese hinterland. Although the rulers of these states assumed Islamic titles and kept Islamic officials in their entourage, this overt Islamization of the rulers does not seem to have caused major alterations in their way of life or outlook. See Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 68; Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Marocco and Indonesia* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 12.

world. This impression is also justified by the fact that geographically, Indonesia is situated at the farthest distance away from the cradle of Islam in the Middle East. This fact, in addition to some serious obstacles that hindered the spread of Islam during the colonial period, made Indonesia, to a certain degree, less "Arabized" than other regions in the Muslim world. Indonesia is only one among a few Muslim countries that does not use the Arabic script as a means of expressing (and recording) her national language.[130] This also creates another impression that Indonesia is culturally less Islamic, in the sense that Islamic elements are less noticeable in her cultural expression.

Most studies on Indonesia by Western scholars tend to underestimate the role of Islamic elements in the shaping of Indonesian culture. This might be misleading. Clifford Geertz, for instance, in spite of his thorough examination of Javanese religious life, identified Islam only with particular characteristics approved by the modernist group, and ascribed everything else "to aboriginal or Hindu-Buddhist background, gratuitously labeling much of the Muslim religious life in Java 'Hindu'." Hodgson, whose criticism of Geertz is referred to by Madjid, also regarded Geertz's inclusion of Cairo as a source of orthodoxy as irrelevant; and only "betrays a modern source of

[130] It is by no means that Indonesian Muslims pay less attention to the significance of Arabic language as a medium of learning their religion. Indeed Arabic script had been in use for several centuries as a medium of Indonesian-Malay political and cultural expressions before the Dutch colonial administration forced the use of Latin script instead of Arabic. In the advanced level of *pesantren* education Arabic remains a principal subject of study, and is used as a medium of instruction for religious matters. To a lesser degree, this also happens in a number of *madrasahs*. The knowledge of Arabic has been introduced to every devout Muslim since his or her early age, at least to the extent they could perform their daily prayers and read their Holy Scripture. Arabic, after all, is an important language for any Muslim, since it is the language of worship, the language of the greatest parts of Islamic tradition, and is widely believed as the language preferred by God to forward His revelation. See Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'an* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1994), pp. 41-42. For the significance of Arabic script throughout the Muslim world, see Gerhard Endress, *An Introduction to Islam*, translated by Carole Hillenbrand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 146-149. According to Endress, the spread of Arabic script took place following the triumphal progress of Islam over Near East to North and Central Africa, and eastwards through Iran and India as far as Indonesia. The Arabic script remained in use in the lands of Islam where the language of the inhabitants or of the immigrants (in the case of Turkey) gained dominance as a government and literary language. After all, the Arabic script is the eternal symbol of Islamic cultural community and has remained so until today.

Geertz' bias." Geertz was also criticized for neglecting the historical dimension in his anthropological investigation. In opposition to Geertz's point of view, Hodgson maintained that for those who understand Islam better, it is evident that "very little has survived from the Hindu past even in inner Java and raise the question why the triumph of Islam was so complete."[131]

Madjid tends to follow a more positive outlook upheld by Hodgson in terms of perceiving the existence of Islamic elements in Indonesian culture. Thus he concurs with Hodgson that Islam has thoroughly influenced the shaping of Indonesian culture.[132] But, still more importantly, Islam held a special appeal, so that Islam could have relatively quickly attracted a great number of people in Indonesia to embrace this new faith. Moreover, this new faith grew steadily more dominant and became the strongest system of belief adhered to by the majority of the country's population. The appeal of Islam for the Indonesian people has been discussed by Bill Dalton in his introduction to *Indonesia Handbook* as follows:

> Its appeal was first and foremost psychological. Radically egalitarian and possessing a scientific spirit, when Islam first arrived in these islands it was a forceful revolutionary concept that freed the common man from his Hindu feudal bondage. Until Islam arrived, he lived in a land where the king was an absolute monarch who could take away his land and even his wife at whim. Islam on the other hand, taught that all men in Allah's eyes are made of the same clay, that no man shall be set apart as superior. There were no mysterious sacraments or initiation rites, nor was there a priest class. With its direct and personal relationship

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[131] Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 2, p. 551, n. 2. In Madjid's work see his *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 68. For Geertz's discussion on Javanese religious life, see his *The Religion of Java* (Glenco, Illinois: Free Press, 1960), especially pp. 125 ff. See also Zifirdaus Adnan, "Islamic Religion: Yes, Islamic (Political) Ideology: No!" p. 443.

[132] Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 69. To justify his arguments, Madjid frequently refers to the fact that Islam has made a very significant contribution in constructing Indonesian political and social cultures. Many terms used to express social and political ideas are borrowed from Arabic in spite of more English loanwords are used lately. This will be apparent if one considers the intrinsic values of Pancasila, the state ideology and national philosophy. Islamic elements have been firmly established in a number of concepts underlying this ideology, such as *adil* (*al-ʿadl*, or justice), *adab* (*al-adab*, or civilization), *rakyat* (*raʿīyah*, or people), *hikmat* (*al-ḥikmah*, or wisdom), *musyawarah* (*al-shūrā*, or deliberation), and *wakil* (*al-wakīl*, or representative). The ideas inherent in these words borrowed from Arabic would never have been adopted into the concept of Pancasila, unless Islam had contributed profoundly toward shaping the Indonesian worldview.

> between man and God, Islam possessed great simplicity. *Everyone* could talk to Allah.[133]

Thus, Madjid emphasizes the point that the most attractive aspect of Islam lies within its egalitarian character. He further quotes a statement from *The Encyclopedia Britannica* concerning how Islam deals with this concept:

> From the time of [the] origin of Islam, social reform, through the enunciation of moral principles and actual legal enactment, formed part of the central core of Islamic teaching. Islam, indeed, may be described as a socioeconomic reform movement backed by certain strong religio-ethical ideas about God, man and universe.
>
> The most fundamental and dynamic factor of social ethic that Islam gave was egalitarianism: all members of the faith, irrespective of race, colour or social or economic status, are equal participants in the community.[134]

In addition to the above aspects, there is another important contribution made by Islam to enhance the spread of egalitarianism. This, as Madjid suggests, deals with the decision to choose Riau-Malay language as the unifying national language.[135] Malay, as the origin of today's Indonesian language, had been a *lingua franca* in the archipelago since the 14th century, and increasingly spread out in the subsequent periods throughout Southeast Asia, reaching as far as India and South China.[136]

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[133] Bill Dalton, *Indonesia Handbook* (Chico, California: Moon Publications, 1988), 4th edition, pp. 9-10. In Madjid's work, the quotation appears in Indonesian language in his *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 70, referring to the 2nd edition.

[134] See Fazlur Rahman, "Islam." *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 12, p. 669. In Madjid, see *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 71.

[135] Madjid reiterates explaining this idea in several works of his, such as *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, p. 71, and "Masyarakat Madani dan Investasi Demokrasi: Tantangan dan Kemunginan," a foreword remark to Ahmad Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani: Arkeologi Pemikiran "Civil Society" dalam Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999), pp. 18-19. See also P.J. Zoetmulder, *The Cultural Background of Indonesian Politics* (Columbia: The Institute of International Studies, The University of South Carolina, 1967), p. 10.

[136] S. Takdir Alisjahbana, "Language Policy, Language Engineering and Literacy in Indonesia and Malaysia," in Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), *Advance in Language Planning* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), p. 394. Alisjahbana was convinced that Malay had reached as far as India on the grounds that al-Rānirī—who was born and brought up in India—had such a good command on Malay on his arrival in Acheh in 1637. It would have hardly happened without accepting the fact that at that time Malay must have been widely known in Gujarat. Husen Abas, in his *Indonesian as a Unifying Language of Wider Communication: A Historical and Socio-linguistic Perspective* (Canberra: Pacific Linguistic, The Australian National University, 1987), goes even further by

The feasibility of Malay as an acceptable *lingua franca* was primarily determined by its character as an egalitarian, simple, democratic, open and cosmopolitan language, all of which are compatible with the very nature of Islam. Being the *lingua franca* in Southeast Asian region, Malay was elevated to a regional Islamic language equal to the position of Bengali, Persian, Urdu, Pushto and Swahili languages for their respective localities. Moreover, the Islamic Malay language paved the way for easier cultural communication in Southeast Asia, similar to Turkish for the regional Islam of Anatolia and Balkan regions.[137] When a youth congress was held in Jakarta in 1928, Malay was decreed as the national language, called Bahasa Indonesia. This decision was unanimously approved by all of the participants, including those of the Javanese origin. Moreover, the Javanese youth movement, the Jong Java (the Young Javanese), by far the largest youth organization at that time, had adopted Malay as an official means of communication. They admitted that Malay was much simpler than Javanese, and thus it could be very instrumental in enhancing the spirit of egalitarianism, the most important element to build nationalism. The Javanese were deeply aware that their vernacular language, with its complexity and hierarchical structure, was not conducive with the demand of founding an ideal type of the modern Indonesian national state.[138]

With the above discussion, it should be clear how Madjid emphasized, first of all, the genuine character of Islam as a religion enhancing the concept of egalitarianism. In the Indonesian context, this egalitarianism was reflected, among the others, in the people's acceptance of the Malay language to be a hybrid of their national language. It was this egalitarian nature of Islam that had attracted a great number of populations to convert to this new faith, thus abandoning their Hindu-Buddhist beliefs. Nevertheless, since Islam came to

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stating that it was due to the Portuguese's occupation of Malacca that Malay reached India and South China. He says: "Thanks to the Portuguese, the use of ML [Malay language] was not limited only to South-East Asia, but spread even further to centres of commerce in India and South China." See p. 27. It remains questionable, however, whether or not the spread of Malay to these areas was exactly due to the Portuguese occupation of Malacca. Since Abas did not support his idea with any historical evidence, a further examination of this issue is necessary to verify it.

[137] Madjid, "Masyarakat Madani dan Investasi Demokrasi", pp. 18-19.

[138] See Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, pp. 71-72.

Indonesia very late, that is, at the time when it was in its lower level of decline in terms of political and cultural achievements, the Islamic current that penetrated Indonesia was considerably weak.[139] It could hardly transform the cultural life of the indigenous people radically and thoroughly. This is another factor that made Indonesian Islam only hold a peripheral position in terms of cultural and scientific contributions in the midst of the Muslim world. However, as has been stated previously, it is by no means true that Islam made no significant contribution to the shaping of Indonesian culture. Islam in fact played an important role in determining the future of the nation through its own form of cultural enrichment.

Madjid places special emphasis on the necessity of understanding Islam with the spirit of humanitarianism. Based on the Qur'ānic injunction that Muslims have to uphold a good relationship with all humans (*ḥabl min al-nās*), he insists that the concept of humanitarianism in Islam ranks second, coming after maintaining a good relationship with God (*ḥabl min Allāh*). This concept has been widely known among Muslims, since they have heard it quite frequently and on many different occasions.[140] Therefore, Madjid provides more emphasis as well as affirmation by showing the foundation of this

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[139] Madjid has drawn an interesting chronological comparison between the Middle East and Indonesia in order to demonstrate how late Indonesia was Islamized. As it is commonly believed that Islam came to Indonesia only as late as 13th or 14th century, this implies that the process of Indonesian Islamization took place about six to seven centuries later than the conquest of Spain and India under the Umayyad dynasty. During this era (early 8th century), in Java, people were still heavily occupied with a colossal project of constructing the Buddhist monument, the Borobudur temple. More significantly, Sriwijaya, the greatest Buddhist kingdom of South Sumatra, witnessed its heyday at the same time as the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad. Still later on, Majapahit, the last and the greatest pre-Islamic kingdom of Java, was founded only about a half century after the devastation of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258. It also means that Majapahit came to power about two centuries after al-Ghazali (d. 1111), the great Muslim theologian. See Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, pp. lviii-lix. With this chronological comparison it is clear that Islam came to Indonesia only after it had experienced its lowest degree of cultural and political achievement.

[140] This injunctions deals with the Qur'ānic verse 3:112, "Abasement is made to cleave to them whenever they are found, except under a covenant with God and a covenant with men, and they have drawn down to the wrath of God (on them)." The message conveyed by this verse is among the most popular theme elaborated by Muslim preachers in their sermons or religious admonitions. See, for instance, E. Saifuddin Anshari, *Kritik atas Faham dan Gerakan "Pembaharuan*," pp. 2-3, in which he approved the necessity of maintaining this universal value of Islam.

injunction from the Holy Scripture and by re-examining some historical facts supporting this principal doctrine. It is in congruence with the spirit of this doctrine that the Paramadina seminar series are not to be based merely on a normative approach. In other words, it ought not to emphasize what should be done in conformity with the doctrine, but must be established on the basis of the cultural facts of Islam. This deals with the historical realities of how the doctrines were implemented in the Muslim community of the past.[141] In other words, those normative doctrines would be discussed in terms of how they had been empirically implemented by Muslims in the past. Madjid argues that although the doctrines were perfect, the real meanings of the doctrine given were actually found in its application in real life, and how the doctrine influenced the social and cultural life of the people in their spatial and temporal contexts. Therefore, Madjid tries to avoid the use of a dogmatic approach in examining the doctrinal issues, and takes an analytical approach instead, even if he does continue to deal with the doctrinal source of the religion.[142]

The use of the cultural approach, according to Madjid, also provides Muslims with a broader perspective and liberates them from a tendency toward dogmatism and normativism. Historical consciousness has become an urgent requirement, which allows people to see how the doctrinal values were applied empirically in congruence with spatial and temporal necessity. It was in these historical and cultural contexts that the human relationship with God (*ḥabl min Allāh*) should be interpreted as also an interhuman relation. This is because Islamic civilization is the civilization of Muslims, in the sense that it is a civilization constructed by people who have a high commitment to Islamic values, whose main core was fear of God (*taqwā*) and the endeavor to gain His favor. On the other hand, civilization also assumes a form of human creativity and human endeavor to survive among others. Therefore, it must be understood as belonging to human nature, and as having a human character.[143] It is in line with this reasoning that the necessity of understanding Indonesian "environment" in order to apply Islamic doctrines properly may be regarded as a type of *ijtihād*. In this respect, Madjid insists

[141] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, pp. xiii-xiv.
[142] Ibid., p. xiv.
[143] Ibid.

that every endeavor to implement Islamic doctrines in Indonesia must be based on certain social and cultural considerations, with their three main characteristics: growth, development, and plurality.[144]

According to Madjid, it is not difficult for Muslims to accept the idea of growth and development, since they are convinced that nothing remains eternal except God alone (Q.S. 28:88). Non-eternal beings are subject to change, because they are created from nothing. Madjid further explains how this idea of change should be maintained in implementing religious doctrines. Although the doctrine is perfect in itself, it must be kept in mind that it only deals with the real life of the community. Madjid calls this "historical consciousness," which implies that all systems relating to human life are designed according to a specific and particular era or geographical location. He associates this issue with the theory of abrogation (*nāsikh-mansūkh*) in Islamic jurisprudence, which also has its foundation in the Qur'ānic affirmation, "None of Our revelation do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar" (2:106).

The idea of growth and development, in Islamic perspective, is also supported by the fact that the prophets of God were sent to their community one after another, in accordance with local and temporal demands. Therefore, Madjid insists, it is necessary to reconsider the Qur'ānic assessment that all religious doctrines have some similar basic principles, although they manifest diversified external performances. Madjid bases his argument on the Qur'ānic statement, "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah—that which We have sent by inspiration to thee—and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely that ye should steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein" (42:13). In this statement, there is a divine message that humans should not be disunited, although they belong to different religious systems of belief. Humans are asked to uphold the common denomination found among diversified religious systems, and not to be puzzled by external differences. Any deviation from correct belief must be rectified by undertaking a thorough and impartial examination.[145]

The difficulties that might interrupt the process of growth and progress, Madjid maintains, may originate from Muslims themselves.

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[144] Ibid., pp. lxvii-lxviii.
[145] Ibid., p. lxix.

This may come about as a result of their own misperception, based on their claim that they have "arrived at" or "achieved" the truth, an attitude termed by Madjid as "absolutism."[146] Madjid insists that absolutism should be rejected on the grounds that it is against the nature of Islam, which is commonly characterized as "the path" or "the way" (*ṣirāṭ, sabīl, sharīʿah, ṭarīqah, minhāj, mansak*). Metaphorically, these words may be understood as indicating that Islam is a way to be followed in an attempt to achieve God's favor. Based on the meaning of "path" conveyed in the idea of Islam, the concept of growth and progress also bears the notion of gradual staging (*tadrīj*), which, in turn, also indicates the idea of motion or movement toward a particular goal. Accordingly, the idea of path and the ethos of dynamic motion affirms that there is no "once-and-for-all" solution for the problems of life that are in constant motion and change. The solution for a problem is uniquely valid only for a specified time and locality. Muslims, therefore, should also be aware of their particular rights when they aspire to solve their own problems, in congruence with the social and cultural progress they have experienced so far. This is only to reinforce the argument that there is a particular pattern of a local solution for a local problem, without losing the universal comparability among the whole Muslims. According to Madjid, such a particular solution for a specific local problem is fairly valid.[147] In brief, borrowing Liddle's expression, "Islam remains a universal religion, but its practice must be culture-specified."[148]

With regard to pluralism, Madjid asserts that diversity and plurality in the human way of life is something willed by God. When the Qurʾān mentions that humans are created in many different groups of ethnicity so that they may recognize each other and pay mutual respect (49:13), it must be understood that the plurality has turned toward pluralism. Pluralism, in this context, means a value system which obliges humans to be respectful of all kinds of diversity, by accepting it as a true reality and by performing all good deeds in

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[146] See Madjid, *Cita-cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi*, p. 191.

[147] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxiv. Madjid justifies his argument by referring to Aḥmad Zakkī Yamānī, a former minister of mines in Saudi Arabia, who said that the state is allowed to set a legal solution for any new problem, by consulting the general principles of the *sharīʿah*, and reconsidering the public interests or social well-being. See Aḥmad Zakkī Yamānī, *Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues* (Jeddah: The Saudi Publishing House, 1388 A.H.), p. 6.

[148] R. William Liddle, *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics*, p. 74.

accordance with each individual character.[149] The Qur'ān further emphasizes that the diversity of human languages and colors must be accepted as a positive reality, as one of the signs of the divine glory (30:22). In another verse, it is also stated that the diversity in ways of life and worldviews held by humans is not something to be worried about. On the contrary, it should encourage people to strive for achieving goodness. It is God alone who will clarify why people are diversified, at the time they return to Him (5:48). Based on the above Qur'ānic decree, in addition to the multifarious geographical and cultural features of Indonesia, Muslims must be realistic. They should be aware that the prevailing socio-cultural realities of a diversified community are to be established on a common platform. In Islam, to locate that common denomination is a part of the doctrinal sanctions, since God has ordained the Prophet to summon the people of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) to come together on the same platform, the *kalimah sawā'*, that is the belief in the One God.

> Say: 'O, People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you, that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah.' If they turn back, say ye: 'Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's will)' (3:64).

Madjid provides some historical examples to clarify further how pluralism has been practiced among Muslim communities in the past. The first example referred to by Madjid is the so-called "Constitution of Madīnah," which established a federation between nine different groups, eight clans from Madīnah and the 'clan' of Meccan emigrants (*Muhājirūn*) from the Quraysh. In this constitution, apart from having his religious claims recognized, Muḥammad was simply a head of one of the nine groups, and had no special authority, except that if disputes endangered the peace among them they should be

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[149] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxv. For another interesting discussion of religious pluralism in the Islamic Indonesian context, see his other work, "In Search of Islamic Roots for Modern Pluralism: The Indonesian Experience," in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Development in Indonesian Islamic Thought* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University Program for Southeast Asian Studies, 1996), pp. 89-116. See also his "Pluralisme Agama di Indonesia." *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 62-68. The article was originally written in English "Religious and Socio-Political Pluralism: Islamic Understanding in the Context of Indonesian Experience," and was presented by Madjid for the International Conference on Religion and Peace, Vienna (March 1993).

referred to him.[150] On the other hand, Muḥammad was reported to have affirmed the rights of those communities to live together peacefully as a single *ummah*, and established the common platform approved by all participating groups.[151]

Following this example, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph, also made a similar treaty, known as the Aelia covenant, dealing with the people of Jerusalem.[152] After ʿUmar, the Umayyad caliphs of Spain were reported to have upheld the same policy in dealing with non-Muslim subjects. These examples provide a clear illustration of

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[150] W. Montgomery Watt, "Muḥammad," in P.M. Holt, K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), vol. 1, p. 41.

[151] The main objective of the constitution of Madīnah was to determine the relationship between Muslims and other groups living in this newly established town, with a special framework of alliance. Through this covenant, all of the participating groups were agreed to make the city an indivisible unity (*ummah wāḥdah*). However, some non-Muslim groups—especially the Jews—though held a subordinate place in the federation as allies of the main participants, were allowed to retain their religious belief and to exercise it without interference or molestation. For further discussion on this issue, see Adolph Wismar, *A Study in Tolerance as Practiced by Muḥammad and His Immediate Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927); W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 221-228; Uri Rubin, "The 'Constitution of Medina': Some Notes." *Studia Islamica*, vol. 62 (1985), pp. 5-23. For a special examination on the concept of *ummah* used in this covenant, see Frederick M. Denny, "Ummah in the Constitution of Medina." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 36 (1977), pp. 39-47. See also R. B. Serjeant, "The 'Constitution of Medina'." *The Islamic Quarterly*, vol. 8 (1964), pp. 3-16; idem, "The *Sunnah Jāmiʿah* pacts with the Yathrib Jews and the *Taḥrīm* of Yathrib." *BSOAS*, vol. 41 (1978), pp. 1-42. For a critical examination of this "constitution" in the current Islamic discourse in Indonesia see Ahmad Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, especially pp. 331-351(Epilog).

[152] Aelia or Īliyā' is another name of Jerusalem, given to it by Emperor Hadrian. The city was conquered by Muslim forces in 636-637, during the reign of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph. However, the aged patriarch Sophronius, the ruler of Jerusalem, stipulated that surrender was contingent upon the fulfillment of one condition, that ʿUmar come in person to settle the terms of surrender. The patriarch preferred to deal with the caliph himself rather than with any of his generals. The treaty or covenant of Jerusalem was drawn by ʿUmar himself, and it reads, according al-Ṭabarī, as follows: "This is the covenant which ʿUmar, the servant of Allah, commander of the faithful, gave to the people of Ailia (sic). He granted them safety for their persons, their possessions, their churches, and their crosses, their sick and their well, and the rest of the members of their religion. Their churches shall not be inhabited, nor torn down, nor diminished in the least, nor shall their crosses be touched, nor any other possession of theirs…." See Wismar, ibid., p. 81-82. For another complete text of the covenant, see al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Tā'rīkh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk)*, translated by Yohanan Friedmann (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), vol. 12, pp. 191-192. For the city of Aelia, see *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 11, p. 168n.

how Muslims in the past were psychologically and culturally prepared to accept plurality as an undeniable fact.[153] Madjid also refers to Max I. Dimont, who illustrates the extent Muslim rulers of Spain maintained plurality. The advance of Muslims in that country in the early eighth century was claimed to have terminated the cruel religious oppression that had been exercised by Iberian rulers for many years. A Visigothic king Reccared (586-601), for instance, was reported to have converted as many as 90,000 Jews to Christianity.[154] But under Muslim rulers, as reported by Dimont in another of his work, for about 500 years Spain was a peaceful home for three religions altogether, i.e., Islam, Christianity and Judaism; and they shared in the same advanced civilization. Yet, their harmonious inter-religious relation did not force people to be unified in belief. The majority of the population retained their Christianity although the political authority was held by the Muslim rulers. This harmonious relationship resulted more likely in bloodline mixture than in religious conversion, as illustrated by Dimont in the following citation:

> The Arab conquest of Spain in 711 had put an end to the forcible conversion of Jews to Christianity begun by King Recarred in the sixth century. Under the subsequent 500-year rule of the Moslems emerged the Spain of three religions and "one bedroom." Mohammedans, Christians, and Jews shared the same brilliant civilization, an intermingling that affected "bloodlines" even more than religious affiliation.[155]

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[153] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxvi.

[154] Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History* (New York: New American Library, 1962), p. 221.

[155] Max I. Dimont, *The Indestructible Jews: Is There a Manifest Destiny in Jewish History?* (New York: The New American Library, 1971), p. 151. In Madjid's work, see his *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxvii, both in English and Indonesian translation. For this quotation, Madjid refers to the 1973 edition, p. 203. It must be kept in mind, however, that not all of the Muslim rulers of Spain were true advocates of religious tolerance. The religious tolerance demonstrated by Muslims of Spain, according to other scholars, might have lasted during the period of 750-1000 (less than that estimated by Dimont), that is during the Umayyad caliphate of Cordova. During this period, the Jews were regarded as brothers of Muslims. However, by the fall of Cordova caliphate, the feeling of betrayal was strongly reinforced by the way the Nasrid rulers of Granada behaved toward the Jews. The Nasrid, the ruling dynasty of the last remaining independent Islamic bastion in Spain, treated the Jews very harshly, when the Christians managed to regain their authority over Spain. See Allan H. Cutler and Helen E. Cutler, *The Jews as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp. 258-261.

Another reference is also made to Ibn Taymīyah, who praised the Muslim rulers of Spain who were in charge of maintaining that religious tolerance. The Muslim rulers of Spain, according to Ibn Taymīyah, in their administration of religious and political affairs, were well known for their conformity with the traditions of the people of Madīnah, *ʿalā madhhab ahl al-Madīnah*.[156]

Madjid concludes that in reality, pluralism is a divine decree (*sunnat Allāh*), and will never change. It is also impossible to work against it. Islam, as its Holy Scripture has affirmed, is the religion which admits the rights of other religions—except of those founded on paganism or polytheism—to survive and retain their belief system. The Qurʾānic acknowledgement of these rights, in Madjid's point of view, is considered to be the foundation for the universal concept of social and cultural pluralism. Several Qurʾānic verses affirming this idea have been cited by Madjid, one of which reveals:

> To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety. So judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you; so strive in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah. It is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute (5:46-48).

Based on the above citation, the awareness of religious pluralism also signifies the continuity of the principal religious doctrines from one prophet to another, with no exception, or distinguishing one from another (Q. 2:136; 4:163; 45:16-18). Islam, Madjid suggests, as the last religion revealed by God, claims itself as the ultimate

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[156] Madjid, ibid., p. lxxi, quoting Ibn Taymīyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah fī Naqḍ Kalām al-Shīʿah wa'l-Qadarīyah* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿat al-Kubrā al-Amīrīyah, 1322 A.H.), vol. 3, p. 258. Indeed, in this passage, Ibn Taymīyah was not explicitly concerned with the issue of religious tolerance demonstrated by Muslims of Spain. Rather, he only discusses a general feature of their remarkable administration of religious and political affairs as widely recognized by many nations. Madjid's judgement, therefore, may be only an indirect inference from this statement. But the point made by Ibn Taymīyah was largely directed to comparing their *madhhab* affiliation with that of the people of Iraq and of the Shiʿites. Muslims of Spain, as suggested above, were the followers of *madhhab ahl al-Madīnah*, which, according to Ibn Taymīyah, was the most authoritative *madhhab*. Accordingly, they were far different from the Iraqi Muslims who were the followers of the school of al-Awzāʿī; and even more different than the Shiʿites.

process from within the stages of religious development. But it must be kept in mind that with this ultimate position, Islam acknowledges the rights of the other religions to exist as well as to be practiced. Therefore, it is not permissible to coerce people to accept a new religion instead of the one they have adhered to (2:256; 10:99). Moreover, the Qur'ān also indicates that all adherents of any religious system will be safe, insofar as they belief in God, the Day of Judgement, and strive to do good deeds (2:62; 5:26). Madjid insists that these doctrines serve as the foundation of religious tolerance, which has become a genuine characteristic of Islam throughout its history.

In spite of its clarity and sound reasoning, Madjid's interpretation of these verses as such, inevitably, aroused a number of misunderstandings and criticisms among his fellow Muslims in the country. It is due to this loose and liberal interpretation of the concept of religious tolerance *vis-à-vis* religious plurality that Madjid became the object of severe criticism. A group of scholars even accused him of manipulating the interpretation of these verses, giving the wrong interpretation to some Ḥadīth, and abrogating the authoritative definition of Islam. For those scholars, to whom R. William Liddle attributed the name of "Scripturalists," Islam has a categorical definition made by the *'ulamā'*. Even the Prophet himself has given a distinctive definition of Islam in a Ḥadīth narrated by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, that Islam is that, "You testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is His messenger; you perform prayers, pay alms giving, fast during the month of Ramaḍān, and you go for pilgrimage."[157] In contrast with this "authoritative" definition of Islam, Madjid, reflecting his substantialist view, spoke out against religious intolerance.

> "The religion that is true….is *al-ḥanīfiyat al-samḥah*—seeking truth that is broad-minded and tolerant, without fanaticism, and that doesn't shackle the soul." Jews, Christians, Muslims are all parts of the "religion of Abraham," a continuity (*kesinambungan*) that Muslims have always understood better than others. Moreover, "*al-Islam* is in fact not [originally] the name of a religion, but of an attitude" of submission or surrender (*tunduk, pasrah*) to God which it shares with other religions.[158]

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[157] For our discussion of this Ḥadīth see supra, pp. 110-111.
[158] Liddle, *Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics*, p. 270.

Madjid was accused of merely taking an etymological meaning of Islam, which is only supplementary and cannot be used in a more general context. Likewise, if the *zakāh*, another pillar of Islam, is to be understood etymologically, it simply means "growth." Consequently, all enterprises intended to gain profit should be exempted from the obligation of paying alms. Moreover, if a person is capable of restraining himself from any desire, he is not obliged to undertake *al-ṣawm*, since he has fulfilled the idea of fasting by restraining his desire. In general, they accused Madjid of having undermined the *sharīʿah* and neglected the obligation to fulfill its requirements. This is the way, the critics further assert, adopted by the Orientalists to jeopardize Islam.[159]

These definitions, the critics assert, are not only awkward, having no valid foundation in the Qurʾān and the Ḥadīth, but also reflect only a literal interpretation of the sources. The critics also reject the implications of any interpretation which holds that all religions are to be regarded as true religions, equal to Islam. They maintain that Islam is evidently the only true religion and deny the idea that both Christianity and Judaism belong to the religion of Abraham. Islam, they argue, is clearly declared in the Qurʾān as a distinct and perfect religion.[160] The criticism, however, may have missed the point. Madjid did not mean to deny the fact that Islam is the final and most

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[159] Daud Rasyid, "Kesesatan Dikemas dengan Gaya Ilmiah." *Media Dakwah*, no. 223 (January 1993), pp. 36-37. The *Media Dakwah* is an organ of the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), a Jakarta-based national private organization founded in 1967. Among the missions of this organization is to send Muslim preachers (*dāʿī*) to remote areas of the country, to help to build mosques and other facilities to spread Islam more widely. As a bastion of the Scripturalists, the DDII is openly hostile to the Substantialists, and particularly to Nurcholish Madjid who receives frequently harsh criticism. The *Media Dakwah* is the best known, and among the most widely-read of the Scripturalist publications. Two subsequent volumes of the *Media Dakwah*, nos. 222 and 223 (December 1992 and January 1993), are mostly devoted to criticizing Madjid's ideas, especially dealing with his lecture at the Jakarta Cultural Center, Taman Ismail Marzuqi, on October 21, 1992. For a critical discussion on the *Media Dakwah*, see Liddle, ibid., pp. 266-289. For more criticism on Madjid's ideas, see H. Lukman Hakiem (ed.), *Menggugat Gerakan Pembaharuan Keagamaan: Debat Besar "Pembaharuan Islam"* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Informasi Pembangunan, 1995). See also, E. Saifuddin Anshari, *Kritik atas Faham dan Gerakan "Pembaharuan"* mentioned earlier. For a critical examination of the Scripturalist propaganda against Madjid's renewal ideas, see Ade Armando, "Citra Kaum Pembaru Islam dalam Propaganda *Media Dakwah*." *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 4 (1993), pp. 66-76.

[160] Siti Fathimah, "Modernization and the Contextualization of Islamic Doctrines," pp. 129-130.

perfect religion. Nevertheless, the truth contained in the assertion that Islam is the most perfect and the final religion must be valid only for Muslims. Similarly, Madjid's insistence that all religions are the same and equally true is based on the fact that Islam acknowledges the validity of all monotheistic religions whose prophets and teachings come from the same source, that is God. Islam, therefore, acknowledges their right to exist side by side with it in the same world.[161]

4. Islamic Pluralism and Modern Life

It has been discussed earlier that, according to Bellah, Islam, compared to the time and locality in which it was initially revealed, was very modern or even too modern, and thus somehow failed to maintain its original character as a religion upholding an egalitarian and cosmopolitan worldview. The period of the guided and enlightened caliphate (*al-khilāfat al-rāshidah*), with its democratic and open character, lasted thirty years, and was finally abandoned, only then to be replaced by the period of the kingdom (*al-mulk*) of the authoritarian Umayyad dynasty. The Umayyad reign was a revivification of the Arab tribal system that had existed prior to the advent of Islam. The dynasty was deemed to have accepted Islam for purely political considerations, and was always in opposition to the more fanatical among the faithful. The advent of the Umayyads, therefore, signified the failure of this initial experiment of democratic life, due to the lack of a social infrastructure to sustain its existence in the Middle Ages.[162]

Madjid, based on the above argument of Bellah, makes a further assessment that if Islam is intrinsically equal to modernity, modern life

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[161] Ibid., pp. 130-131. For Madjid's self defense against such a criticism, see among other works, "Mencari Kebenaran yang Lapang," in his *Dialog Keterbukaan*, pp. 253-256.

[162] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxxii. With regard to the characteristic of the Umayyad reign, Fazlur Rahman gives a special remark on it. "The Umayyad," Rahman said, "fully aware of the fact that it was Islam that had engendered unity among the Arabs and brought them success and glory, retained the Caliphal form and as such the religious basis of the state and accepted the Shari'a as giving it constitution. But not only was their administrative law not consciously based on the Shari'a, they used the state primarily as an instrument of personal power. Their personal lives were not wholly un-Islamic but were certainly far removed from the pious ideals of the early Caliphs and fell far short of the expectations and demands of the religious leaders of the Community." See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1966), pp. 65-66.

should, therefore, provide Muslims with opportunities to implement their religious doctrines more fully. Moreover, being modern can be regarded as preparation for gaining a better social infrastructure that would help to implement Islamic teachings more thoroughly. In other words, the modern age must equip Muslims with an ability to understand their religion better and to grasp the primeval spirit of its doctrines. Thus, Muslims are required to take more advantages of the forms of modernity that come from the West, though without being necessarily Westernized. They may follow their Muslim predecessors in the past who successfully adopted some elements of Hellenism in order to improve their insight into their own religion through metaphorical interpretation. Madjid's idea seems to be in line with Rahman's point of view in describing the Muslims' encounter with Hellenist intellectualism in the Middle Ages, in the following citation:

> From the 2nd/8th to the 4th/10th centuries, a series of intellectual and cultural crises arose in Islam, the most serious and significant of which was that produced by Hellenist intellectualism, but Islam met all those successfully—assimilating, rejecting and adjusting itself to the new currents. But the Muslims were, at that time, psychologically invincible, politically masters of the situation and, at the level of the content of religion, not encumbered by a dead weight of tradition—for it was largely the new elements and currents of thought that supplied and built up the content of the Muslim tradition itself.[163]

However, to maintain such an optimistic outlook, Muslims need a high level of self-confidence, so that they may acquire a strong psychological foundation to undertake a proactive, rather than reactive, measures toward modernity. Madjid is sanguine that Muslims will achieve that level of self-confidence, since many of the young generation now find ample opportunities to enter into modern life and actively participate in its culture, even without losing their loyalty to their religious belief.[164] Although a clash between modernity and

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[163] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 212.

[164] Madjid suggests that such a level of self-confidence among the young generation has been achieved through their enrolment in higher education or universities, which he characterizes as a "human investment." He insists that the glory of a nation is not to be determined by the amounts of the population nor by the wealth of their natural resources, but by the real quality of their works. In other words, the glory of a nation does not depend on their quantitative factors, but rather on the quality of their human resources. See his *Cita-cita Politik Islam Era Reformasi*, pp. 183-184. Thanks to this "human investment," finally, many Muslims are able to join

Islam is still felt today, and causes some reactive outrages, such a reaction will hopefully soften or diminish over time, as soon as they may be able to forget the bad experience of being colonized by the West for several centuries.[165]

It has been widely known among Muslims that in Islamic law, it is necessary to differentiate—although not necessarily to separate—between the purely religious and non-religious or secular matters. According to conventional technical terms, this is known as differentiating between *ʿibādah* and *muʿāmalah* matters. The first deals with all matters concerning the relationship of the human being and his God, and the second deals with those concerning social relationship among the human beings. In ritual matters, or *ʿibādah*, Muslims are not allowed to create something new, since creating a new form of ritual is condemned as heresy. On the contrary, in non-ritual matters (*muʿāmalah*) creating new matters is even encouraged on the basis of social dynamism and growth, known as *al-maṣlaḥat al-ʿāmmah*, or public well-being. For Madjid, this is the basic perspective maintained by some contemporary Muslim thinkers in Indonesia to promote their new ideas, which are considered to be somewhat strange for those who do not adopt the above-mentioned consideration. This happened in particular to Munawwir Sjadzali, the former minister of religious affairs (for two periods, 1983-1993), with his idea of "Reactualization of Islamic teachings;"[166] and Abdurrahman Wahid, the president of the state (1999-2001) and the former leader of NU

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the ranks of government and business; and, in turn, they are prepared to Islamize not only the peasantry, but also large segments of the middle class and ruling elite. See Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class." *Indonesia*, no. 56 (1993), p. 15. Kuntowijoyo characterizes this phenomenon in terms of the emergence of the new middle class of the *santri* elements. Improvement of the national education has created broad opportunities for the peasantry—with their egalitarian culture—to be lifted up through the process of social mobility. Now many of them have become new technocrats providing the bureaucracy, business and mass organizations with their illuminating ideas. See his *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi*, pp. 370-375.

[165] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxxiii.

[166] "Reactualization" is a formula coined by Munawir Sjadzali as an attempt to solve the psycho-religious problems faced by Indonesian Muslims. In brief, Sjadzali suggests that Muslims should be realistic in dealing with textual doctrines and empirical realities. While many Muslims persistently held that, according to the text, bank interests are categorically *ribā* (usury), and thus they are forbidden (*ḥarām*), in practice, they do not mind depositing their money in banks, and take a lot of profits from the banking system. Likewise, in dealing with inheritance, they all agree that, according to the text, the son should receive twice as much as the daughter. In practice, however, they try to avoid this formula, and invent some excuses to justify their desire to give

(for three periods, 1984-1999), with his concept of *Pribumisasi* Islam or "Islamic indigenization."[167] Basically, their ideas deal with the attempt to make the universal values of Islam effectively applicable to the real conditions of the *ummah*, so that they can achieve more benefits from those values for the betterment of their worldly life. The universal teachings of Islam, as Madjid also emphasizes, should be "translated' in a particular way so that they may "come down to earth" (*membumi*) and meet the contemporary demands (*menzaman*).[168]

For Madjid, the most important feature of Islam *vis-à-vis* modernity lies within its intrinsic character as a religion advocating tolerance and

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equal amounts of inheritance to both sons and daughters, usually by consulting the civil court instead of the religious court. Sjadzali, accordingly, suggests that a new interpretation of the text should be formulated to avoid such a psychological ambiguity. It sounds unfair, Sjadzali argues, to practice something which is in contradiction with one's own belief, using some invented pretexts to justify it. See his *Islam Realitas Baru dan Orientasi Masa Depan Bangsa* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1993, pp. 16-26. Sjadzali's idea of "reactualization" has met some responses from other scholars, such as Ibrahim Hosein, K.H. Ali Yafie, Atho Mudzhar, and Quraish Shihab. See *Kontekstualisasi Ajaran Islam: 70 Tahun Prof. Dr. H. Munawir Sjadzali, M.A.* (Jakarta: IPHI and Paramadina, 1995), pp. 251-332.

[167] *Pribumisasi* (from the word *pribumi*, means indigenous countryman or citizen) or "indigenization" is a hallmark of Abdurrhman Wahid, reflecting his renewal ideas. According to his idea, *Primbumisasi Islam* is an attempt to understand Islam as prescribed by the text in accordance with the local context. Thus *Pribumisasi* also means "contextualization." Accordingly, *Pribumisasi* is not uniquely found in Indonesia, since the idea is also applicable to describe the similar tendency in the other parts of the Muslim world. *Pribumisasi* is, therefore, the antithesis of the "Arabization" or identifying oneself with the Middle Eastern culture in practicing or applying Islamic doctrines. Against this idea, Wahid suggests that strict Arabization will cause uprooting of oneself from his or her indigenous cultural basis. While Islam is universal, Arabization is not always compatible with local demands or environments for Muslims to practice their religion. Yet, *Pribumisasi* is not meant to avoid the juxtaposition of Islamic norms with local traditions. Otherwise, Islam will lose its fundamental character. For instance, the Qur'ān should remain in Arabic, and be recited in its original wording, especially during the prayers. Its translation into different languages is only meant to facilitate an easy understanding, but not to replace its entity. *Pribumisasi*, therefore, is not "Javanization" or "syncretization." It is only meant to be a basis of consideration in an attempt to practice Islamic doctrines more thoroughly in the real context of social and cultural necessities. In brief, with *Pribumisasi*, Muslims are required to reinforce their cultural basis, while maintaining their allegiant adherence to their religious norms. See Abdurrahman Wahid, "Pribumisasi Islam" in Muntaha Azhari and Abdul Munʿim Saleh (eds.), *Islam Indonesia Menatap Masa Depan* (Jakarta: Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, 1989), pp. 81-96. See also, Mujiburrahman, "Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Political Thought of Abdurrahman Wahid." *Islam and Christian—Muslim Relations*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1999), pp. 339-352.

[168] Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, p. lxxxiv.

pluralism. Both tolerance and pluralism are the essential constituents of modernity, conveyed in the nature of Islam. Unfortunately, not all Indonesian Muslims, including some *'ulamā'*, have access to more optimistic and positive views on other religions as offered in the works of some classical scholars. Madjid refers to Ibn Taymīyah who maintained that the Holy Scriptures belonging to the people of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) still contain divine wisdom, having equal sanctity for both followers of the Book and for Muslims. Ibn Taymīyah further insisted that the Salaf, or the pious ancestors of the *ummah*, maintained that the *sharī'ah* of the people before Islam is also the *sharī'ah* of the Muslims, except when the Islamic *sharī'ah* supplies new items which abrogate it. He argues that most of the parts of the Old Testament and the New Testament dealing with law are still valid, and that only a small portion of the New Testament was altered, including some predictions (such as the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad) and some prohibitions (like eating pork). Madjid then insists that it would be unfair to make broad generalizations in terms of judging other religious communities. The Qur'ānic verse quoted by Madjid reveals that not all of the people of the Book were the same. Accordingly, it is more urgent to develop co-operative activities with those people having the same commitment toward the betterment of human life than to exaggerate their differences.[169]

To sum up, the idea of cultural Islam coined by Madjid is basically meant to present the non-political dimension of Islam, so that Indonesian Muslims are able to obtain more opportunities to exercise their religious commitment. In discussing this issue, Madjid places special emphasis on the genuine character of Islam as a religion which appeared too modern for the time it was initially revealed. It advocates tolerant measures toward other religions and thus admits the diversity of beliefs, without losing its own self-confidence. All religions, Madjid points out, share certain universal values which may function as a common platform and serve as a foundation from which the believers may address each other peacefully. This is to affirm that indeed Islam supports the equal rights of all religions to exist in the same world, regardless of the fact that each of them

[169] Madjid, "In Search of Islamic Roots for Modern Pluralism: The Indonesian Experiences," in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward New Paradigm*, pp. 110-111. His citation of Ibn Taymīyah is based on *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ li-man Baddala Dīn al-Masīḥ* (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Majd al-Tijārīyah, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 18.

upholds a distinctive belief and ritual systems. The quality of Islamic tolerance has been proved by historians and is deemed to be a symbol of its modernity. It was due to this tolerant character that Islam, in the past, maintained its rule of the vast part of the world, belonging to nations of diversified civilizations and religious belief systems. Islam, to this extent, is also proven to have advocated the idea of cosmopolitanism.

When Madjid has to contextualize this ideal image of Islam in Indonesia, it soon appeared that in reality, it was quite different. Being obliged to adapt itself to a more dominant local culture, Islam lost some elements of its genuine character as an egalitarian or cosmopolitan religion. On the other hand, due to the long, menacing experience of being occupied by Western imperialism and the critical struggle for survival during the revolutionary independence war and after, Muslims were forced to find every possible means to sustain their community coherence. While many aspired to keep their ideals active through political channels, there were some thinkers who turned their attention toward cultural development. These are the two main tendencies followed by Muslims in their endeavor to be able to exercise their religious commitment more thoroughly. Although it has been frequently claimed that the majority of Indonesian people are Muslims, this numerical factor does not lend much support to the victory of the Islamic political parties in the first general election of 1955. Likewise, their performance did not improve greatly in the subsequent general elections.[170] It implies that not all of Indonesian

[170] The Islamic political parties taking part in the first general election of 1955 were Masyumi (20,9%), NU (18,4%), PSII (2,9%), and Perti (1,3%). These figures did not improve very much when sixteen years later, another general election was held (1971). Masyumi was banned by Sukarno in 1960, and was not allowed to be revived, even when the Sukarno regime tumbled. Another Islamic party, Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Parmusi) was established in lieu of reviving that influential party. The result of 1971 general election was as follows: NU (18,67%), Parmusi (5,36%), PSII (2,39%), and Perti (0,70%). When in January 1973 the state managed to reorganize the political parties in Indonesia, these four Islamic parties were forced to fuse, and became Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP—The Development Unitary Party), while five other parties belonging to nationalist and Christian constituents were fused into Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI—Indonesian Democratic Party). Thanks to the presence of Islam as a common religion adhered to by its leaders and constituents, the PPP was relatively more cohesive than the PDI. Thus it won 29,29% in 1977 general election. However, this figure decreased dramatically when the party could not sustain its integrity and, primarily due to the withdrawal of NU as its main constituent, the party only won 15,97% in 1987. See Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and

Muslims were willing to channel their political aspirations into the available Islamic political parties or trusted them as a reliable vehicle to satisfy their interests. Many of them, though remaining devout Muslims, preferred to support non-Islamic parties, whether nationalist or secular.

When Islamic political parties appeared insufficient to satisfy some Muslims' aspirations, a breakthrough had to be made. Although many Muslims maintained that politics was still a viable outlet for their aspirations, they required that a fundamental transformation in the Islamic political discourse should be clearly articulated. Especially for the younger generations, this transformation conveys the intent of a rational and realistic political program, rather than an ideological and utopian one. Accordingly, the transformation should also be outlined in terms of its dealings with the party affiliation model; that is, from an exclusive attachment to a formal Islamic party to diversified party alliances. Based on this reasoning, in addition to their attempt to redefine the socio-political objectives of Islam, these young generations of Muslims also try to develop a much broader and inclusive political relationship with the existing political parties. Thus, in the light of this new approach, the Muslims' political aspirations forged new bonds with all of the existing political parties, cutting across their inherent ideological cleavages.[171] This is the general tendency apparently manifested by young Muslims since the 1980s. They were more inclined to emphasize the substance rather than the structural form of their struggle for Islam. However, this is not always to be undertaken in the form of an Islamic party, but it may take a variety of routes, as long as they are not in opposition to Islamic principles.[172]

Madjid's emergence from among the young Muslim intellectuals has been so illuminating that many are attracted to follow in his steps. These younger intellectuals not only support his ideas but also manage to develop their own formula more broadly, though still in keeping with Madjid's enthusiasm. Madjid, after all, has served as a sort of beacon for the emerging new spirit of Islamic intellectualism

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the State," pp. 132-133. For the complete results of the parliamentary election of 1955, see Leo Suryadinata, "Indonesia's Political System: Continuity and Change." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*," vol. 9, no. 4 (March, 1988), p. 270.

[171] Effendy, ibid., pp. 254-255.

[172] Ibid., p. 248.

since the mid-1980s. Like Madjid, many of these younger intellectuals also found their chance to pursue their postgraduate education in the West. However, they did not restrict their concerns to Islamic studies but also explored other fields of sciences, such as philosophy, history, politics and other branches of the social sciences. It is through the help of these disciplines that they could produce more reflective interpretations of Islamic doctrines, as manifested in their prolific publications. They applied certain approaches derived from these disciplines to examine doctrinal aspects of Islam, by which they could articulate the Islamic doctrinal relevance to the transformation and growth of economic, political and socio-cultural life of the nation. Therefore, it is plausible to say that the outstanding contribution made by these young intellectuals to the enrichment of Islamic cultural life in Indonesia was not because they learnt Islamic doctrines in the West, but because they learnt how to examine Islam through more scientific approaches.[173] To a certain degree, this also indicates that training in Islamic religious schools has changed considerably, and that, in fact, graduates of IAIN today have as much training as the great religious scholars of Islamic history ever did.[174]

Gaining higher academic degrees from Western universities in fields dealing with other than only Islamic doctrinal matters, they managed to compete with those from the "secular" academic backgrounds.[175] Upon their return to Indonesia, they formed a solid fold of Muslim intellectuals among the elite. Their contribution is considerably great, in that they have established a more positive image of

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[173] Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, p. 169.

[174] Howard M. Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1991), p. 158.

[175] Special credit should be given to Munawir Sjadzali, the Minister of Religious Affairs for two periods (1983-1993) during the Suharto's era. During his ministry, many graduates of the IAIN were sent to Western universities to advance their learning, either for diploma, M.A. or Ph.D. degrees. Among the considerations taken by Sjadzali to send them to the West, rather to the Middle East, are: (1) Through their acquaintance with the Western academic life they will be able to broaden their academic horizon, and learn how to think critically and analytically. (2) Their competitors are those who had enjoyed Western academic training in many fields of sciences, and now they are in charge of different jobs in the country. To avoid a deeper cleavage between the two sides, and to facilitate an easy and harmonious communication between them, Muslim scholars graduated from the IAIN should be provided with the same chance to develop their intellectual capability by taking similar training in the Western universities. See Munawir Sjadzali, *Bunga Rampai Wawasan Islam Dewasa Ini* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1994), p. 84.

Islam in the country.[176] Through their academic achievement and social performance, Islam no longer is seen as merely a part of a peripheral sub-culture in Indonesia. They have been deeply concerned with how to overcome the weaknesses that have hampered the Muslims' cause, that is, "their inability to formulate their religious experiences and values in a language that is understood by the common people of today."[177] It was due to the failures of the previous Muslim political leaders to carry out this task that non-Muslims could dominate the most influential positions in both social and political life.[178] In line with this idea, Madjid, as restated by Hefner, insists "[t]he cumulative result of this failed strategy… was that Muslims were left unprepared to compete with more modernized groups in Indonesian society."[179] Nevertheless, the emergence of this new intellectual spirit among the young Muslim generation with its particular reverberations may be seen as the outgrowth of the implementation of the cultural approach, as originally initiated by Nurcholish Madjid a few decades earlier. They have successfully facilitated an easier way for common people to grasp the essence of Islam, while at the same time reducing the sentiment of Islamophobia and the deeply ingrained fear and suspicion of political Islam.[180] Through their activities, Islam has become more widely accepted as a part of the "national identity," not only as a religion belonging to a fanatical-marginalized constituent of the nation.

In spite of his great contribution to the advancement of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesian, Madjid is not immune from criticism. As in the case discussed previously, this criticism also comes

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[176] Federspiel's work, *Indonesia in Transition: Muslim Intellectuals and National Development* (1998), to a great extent, is dedicated to examining the emergence of these young intellectuals, and how they came to national prominence. They did not only put forward their thinking regarding the important issues of social direction, economic goals and political participation, but also called for fundamental reform concerning the moral structure that should undergird Indonesian nationalism. This group of Muslim intellectuals, gaining considerable support from the government, makes their strenuous efforts to present an amicable attitude toward the implementation of Islamic values as well as transforming them into reality in the Indonesian context. For this conclusive statement, see the back-cover remarks of the book.

[177] M. Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order" Modernization*, p. 43.

[178] Ibid., p. 93.

[179] Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society," p. 6.

[180] M. Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order" Modernization*, p. 42.

from a proponent of the Scripturalist group, Abdul Qadir Djaelani (b. 1938). His criticism of Madjid's renewal ideas, written during his imprisonment under the New Order repressive regime for a decade (1984-1993), is not very much different from that made by his fellows. But in general, Djaelani's critical work, published as *Menelusuri Kekeliruan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Nurcholish Madjid* (Searching for the Fallacy of Nurcholish Madjid's Islamic Renewal Thought), is mainly directed to prove his allegation that Madjid's renewal movement has ruined the essential doctrines of Islam. It is also accused of having an evident link with the Jewish Free Massonry, as well as only being in support of the New Order political interests.[181]

However, there is not enough space to discuss all of the above points in this limited space. I would like to highlight Djaelani's criticism dealing with Madjid's perseverance that the issues promoted by the Islamic political parties and mass organizations were not attractive enough and obsolete. They had also failed to restore the positive and sympathetic image of Islam.[182] Twenty-two years later, in 1992, Madjid reiterated his idea that "Islam yes, Islamic party no" remained relevant to current Indonesian Muslim life, and that what happened at that time was in fact, as Madjid claimed, a fulfillment of the spirit of "Islam yes, Islamic party no."[183] Based on this assessment, Djaelani concludes that Madjid approved the Bill no. 8/1985, stipulating that all political parties and mass organizations have to take Pancasila as their sole foundation. Djaelani even points out that in the *Tempo* weekly news-magazine (June 14, 1986), Madjid

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[181] Abdul Qadir Djaelani, *Menelusuri Kekeliruan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam Nurcholish Madjid* (Bandung: Yadia, 1994), p. 1.

[182] Madjid's critical point of view with regard to the performance of Muslim political leaders can be seen in his "The Issue of Modernization among Muslims in Indonesia," p. 149. Among other things, Madjid suggests "the Masyumi leaders suffered from inflexibility, almost dogmatism, in practical considerations. There were serious questions as to what really lay behind their way of thinking. Was it due to their conception of conservative Islamic ideology? Was it because of political-psychological conditions resulting from continuous pressure upon them by the Sukarno regime? Or was it simply [due to] general inability on the part of the older generation to deal with the up-and-coming generation?" For a counter-criticism against the ideas held by Abdul Qadir Djaelani, see Muhammad Wahyuni Nafis, "Kekeliruan dalam 'Kekeliruan'." *Ulumul Qur'an*, no. 3, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 84-93. This article is actually meant as a critical review of Djaelani's work. Unfortunately, however, it fails to discuss the political ideas of Madjid being criticized by Djaelani in his work as presented in the above discussion.

[183] See Nurcholish Madjid, "Beberapa Renungan tentang Kehidupan Keagamaan untuk Generasi Mendatang." *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1993), p. 8.

was reported to have admitted that he played a determining role in passing the Bill. According to Djaelani, therefore, Madjid was responsible for paralyzing Islamic political parties in Indonesia. Being compelled by the regime to ratify the Bill, there were no more Islamic political parties in their formal sense, since Islam was not permitted to be adopted as their constitutional foundation.[184] Djaelani insisted that the draft of the Bill had been rejected by all Islamic political parties (NU, Parmusi, PSII and Perti) as well as mass-religious organizations, including those belonging to non-Muslims, such as the Church Council of Indonesia and Parisadha Hindu-Dharma. Djaelani then quotes several statements of some prominent Muslim leaders to justify his argument. M. Natsir, for instance, the chairman of the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), was quoted to have said that accepting Pancasila as the sole foundation for all political and mass organizations implied abrogating the real meaning and the function of Pancasila. In the past, Natsir argued, Pancasila had functioned as a common denominator and a unifying platform that tolerated all types of diversity. With the new state policy, it turned out to be the opposite, and was then employed to negate particularities which were by their nature inseparable characteristics of the nation.[185]

Djaelani disagrees with Madjid that Muslims forsook Islamic political parties because the issues offered by these parties were not attractive enough or obsolete. Muslims did so because they were coerced by the regime to channel their political aspirations only to GOLKAR, the political vehicle of the ruling powers. He also blamed the general elections held during the New Order era as being far from the ideal concept of democracy. Therefore, the House of Representative, or Parliament, established on the basis of these elections were not fully legitimate, and their claim to have represented the interests of the whole nation was void. He recalls that the first general election of the New Order era was supposed to be held in 1968. But due to the unresolved discrepancies between the government that supported the proportional system and the parties which demanded the district system, the general election was then to be postponed until the (old) Parliament was ready with a new bill regulating the general election. Meanwhile, the government officers boldly made a series of lobbying with political parties outside the Parliament forum, in which a

[184] Djaelani, *Menelusuri Kekeliruan Pembaharuan*, p. 37.
[185] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

consensus was then allegedly reached in favor of the government's interests. The coming general election was decided to be held in a proportional rather than in a district system. Moreover, the military forces were approved to be provided with a hundred seats in the Parliament out of voting, and a third of members of the People's Consultative Assembly were appointed by the President.[186]

Djaelani also denounced the government's policy which obliged all civil servants to vote only for GOLKAR, with the alleged reason of "mono-loyalty." Thus all civil servants who had been supporters of Islamic parties were forced either to get rid of their previous political affiliation or to lose their jobs. Many were destined to detach themselves from their political affiliations. Furthermore, in order to minimize the attractiveness of the Islamic political parties and to curtail the fame of Muslim Members of Parliament, the ruling powers issued the "blacklist of 2,500 ex-Masyumi members," who were not allowed to be nominated as Members of Parliament. As a result, in the 1971 general election, all of the would be Members of Parliament nominated by the Parmusi—the alleged heir of the Masyumi—were crossed off from the list.[187] This has been apparently meant as an attempt by the government to paralyze the Islamic political parties.

Djaelani insists that although formally Islamic political parties were no longer in existence, and they turned out to be "secular"—due to their adoption of Pancasila as their foundation, in reality, they still functioned as an instrumental means to voice Muslims' political aspirations. Though only a minority in Parliament, they remained an enthusiastic group in supporting Muslims' political and religious interests. For instance, in 1974, they vigorously opposed the draft of the marriage law proposed by the government which had apparently undermined Islamic doctrinal values. In 1978, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), which emerged as the fusion of all Islamic parties after 1975, also protested against the inclusion of the Javanese Mysticism (*Kebatinan*) and the Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila (P-4, Guides to the Full Comprehension and Practice of

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[186] Ibid., pp. 40-41, quoting Adnan Buyung Nasution, *Konsensus Nasional* (Jakarta: Yayasan 28 Oktober, n.d.), pp. 18-21. See also Ken Ward, *The 1971 Election in Indonesia: An East Java Case Study* (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1974), pp. 6-8.

[187] Djaelani, ibid., p. 41.

Pancasila) into the Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN, The General Guidelines of the State Policy), by staging a walkout during the session to discuss these matters. In reality, therefore, none of Islamic political parties or Islamic mass organizations was dissolved because of being forsaken by its followers. Djaelani was accordingly convinced that Madjid's idea of "Islam yes, Islamic party no" is naïve, having no basis at all.[188]

Criticism against Madjid's ideas of renewal does not only come from the scripturalists, as has been discussed above. It also comes from the traditionalists who found their greatest momentum of revitalization after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998, followed by the ascension of Abdurrahman Wahid to the state presidency in the ensuing year. This gave them a new impetus to reinvigorate the advancement of their own type of Islamic discourse in the Indonesian scene. However, their reemergence was also supported by their evolvement in academic achievements, at least, during the last two decades of the century. Like other elements of the nation, the traditionalists also found a great chance to improve their cultural and academic performances through their participation in modern educational institutions, both facilitated by the state or by their own private foundations. It is not surprising therefore that a number of notable scholars arose from this group. It is also due to their more advanced academic training that they are able to criticize the discourse that had been constructed by the Neo-Modernist before. Indeed, the momentum seems to have shifted, and allowed another element of Indonesian Islam to reemerge.[189]

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[188] Ibid., p. 43.

[189] Following Abdurrahman Wahid's ascension to the state presidency a number of scholars and politicians of the traditionalist background were appointed to occupy some important posts in the state bureaucracy. This, to some degree, signifies their "vertical mobility," by virtue of which they were able to regain their political participation in the state administration, a chance that they never found during the New Order period. The post of Ministry of Religious Affairs, for instance, was then returned to the traditionalist scholar and *kyahi*, M. Tholchah Hasan. During the Sukarno period, this post had been traditionally "reserved" for the NU *kyahis*. But under Suharto it was granted to "non-sectarian" figures. Now, besides this post, NU scholars and politicians also occupy some other departments in the state bureaucracy. See "Mobilitas Vertikal Nahdlatul Ulama." *Republika Online*, 12 May 2000, as quoted from http://www.republika.co.id /2005/12/18578.htm [accessed 12 May 2000]. See also "Bila Istana 'Bersuasana' Pesantren." *Republika Online*, 31 October 1999, as quoted from http://www.republika.co.id/ 9910/31/29349.htm [accessed 30 October 1999]; Sukidi, "Gus Dur Presiden Santri." *Kompas Online*, 23 October 1999, as quoted

For this criticism by the traditionalists, I will refer to the works of Ahmad Baso,[190] *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani* (1999) and "Islam Liberal sebagai Ideologi: Nurcholish Madjid dan Abdurrahman Wahid' (Liberal Islam as an Ideology: Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, 2000).[191] Baso's criticism, among others, deals with an allegation that Madjid's ideas of renewal are only oriented

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from http://www.kompas.com/ 9910/23/opini/gusd4.htm. [Accessed 26 August 2000]; Seth Mydans, "In Indonesia, Islamic Politics Doesn't Mean Religion: A Cleric is Elected to Lead the Largest Muslim Nation." *New York Times*, 24 October 1999 (microfiche).

[190] Ahmad Baso (born in Makassar, South Sulawesi, 1971), is one of young NU writers who emerged enthusiastically in the mid-1980s. His background as an alumnus of the *pesantren* education in Makassar has affirmed his identity as a "traditionalist scholar in the making." His intellectual training found its particular shape when in 1990 he moved to Jakarta to further his education at the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (LIPIA, the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences). His writing skills are also developed through his career as a journalist, first for the *Ummat* magazine (1994-1998), and then at the *Duta Masyarakat Baru* daily, as an editor. Like other activists in the NU study groups, Baso found a great opportunity to develop his intellectual aptitude, especially through his broad readership of Arabic as well as Western literature. His familiarity with Western philosophical theories has been intensified through his further education at the Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Jakarta, since 1999. His philosophical interest is mainly in postmodern thought, as can be seen in his writings on "civil society." In his *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani* (see below), for instance, he listed no less than seventy works relating to postmodern theories. This may imply that he tries to establish a new direction of Islamic thought in Indonesia with the help of postmodernism. He aspires to tread his own way by refraining himself from "the sovereignty of collective consciousness" established by particular religious communities, including ICMI, NU, HMI, or those associated with a certain model of thought, either socialist, modernist, or neo-modernist. In so doing, he also relies heavily on the works of post-structuralist Muslims thinkers, like Mohammed Arkoun, Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī and Naṣr Abū Zayd, as well as other critical scholars, like Edward Said. Thus, Baso is more inclined to apply deconstructionism as an important element of postmodernism in developing his study. For a critical examination of deconstructionism and post-structuralism in Islamic studies, see Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), especially chapter three, "Deconstructing Orientalism" (pp. 85-127). For the contribution of postmodernism to Islamic studies, see Mohammed Arkoun, "Islamic Studies: Methodologies," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World*, vol. 2, pp. 332-340.

[191] Baso's *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani* is an attempt to describe the delusion experienced by Indonesian Muslims when they were faced with the concept of "civil society," which originates from the West. With this work, Baso gives his critical examination to a number of works by Indonesian writers on the concept of civil society. Through this work too, Baso tries to verify how the civil society as a discourse has been developed and how it gave its contribution to the advancement of Indonesian people in their attempt to achieve a more democratic life and to construct better conditions of social and political environments. Another work by Baso discussing the idea of civil society in the Indonesian-Islamic context is "Islam Liberal sebagai

to the past, that is, to the historical past of Islam, in which Muslims found their glory and superiority over other nations. Baso states that it is from this historical past that Madjid justifies his ideas of democracy, pluralism, and tolerance, which are claimed to have been in practice during the period of the Prophet, his guided Caliphs, and other Islamic ruling dynasties, especially the Umayyad caliphs of Spain. Baso asserts that Madjid also refers to the fact that the word "civilization," in Arabic term, is called *tamaddun* or *madanīyah*, from which the term *madīnah*, or city, is derived. Civilization, or *tamaddun*, according to Madjid, represents urban life, in contrast to rural or nomadic one, called *badāwah*. Therefore, in Madjid's point of view, Islam is principally an "urban phenomenon," embracing a high level of civilization. In an article published in 1990, Madjid, as quoted by Baso, wrote:

> The word *madīnah* gives its derivatives of *madanīyah* and *tamaddun*, meaning 'civilization.' It is therefore clear [not only] in the eyes of early Muslims—but also of Muslims of later times—that civilization is closely related to a settled mode of life, implying that another mode of life, i.e., especially the nomadism of the Arabs, is either crude or simply 'uncivilized.' … It is for this reason that the Prophet often stressed the superiority of the first mode of life to the second one….[192]

According to Baso, to verify these ideas, Madjid refers to the works of Ibn Taymīyah, Bellah, Hodgson, Gellner and Dimont, in which Islam is described as adopting all of the above ideal concepts. Thus Madjid claims that the era of the Prophet and his Caliphs is an ideal model to be followed by all Muslims of the current period in constructing their community life, an attitude commonly maintained

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Ideologi: Nurcholish Madjid dan Abdurrahman Wahid," which first appeared in *Gerbang*, vol. 06, no. 3 (February-April, 2000), pp. 117-131. For this work, however, I will refer to a copy sent as an attachment to the email of Arsekal Salim, forwarded to me on 6 May 2000. I have to thank Salim for his kindness to allow me to access to this document. In this latter work Baso compares Madjid's conception of "civil society" with that promoted by Abdurrahman Wahid.

[192] Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, pp. 272-273, quoting Nurcholish Madjid, "Urbanism in Islam and Indonesian Indigenous Entrepreneurship." *Mizan*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1990), pp. 54-55. Madjid refers to a Ḥadīth of the Prophet narrated by al-Tirmīdhī, Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā'ī on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, saying "He who dwells in the desert (*al-bādiyah*) becomes rough in disposition." The same idea is approved by the Qur'ān, as also referred to by Madjid, "The Arabs of the desert [al-Aʿrāb] are the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy, and most fitted to be in ignorance of the command of which Allah hath sent down to His Messenger" (9:97).

by the modernists. In other words, Madjid, with these ideas, only tries to bring what had happened in the past back into life in the present time, by reviving the ideology of Islamization.[193]

Madjid's inclination to glorify the historical past of Islam, according to Baso, is due to his unawareness of the subtleties of the classical history of Islam, as discussed in the works of Muslim historians, like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Hishām and al-Maqrīzī. In these works, Baso suggests, the earliest Muslim community was not always described as being an ideal model. Even the first Islamic community established by the Prophet at Medina did not reflect the real values of egalitarianism or the idea of tolerance as upheld by Madjid.[194] Madjid's uncritical acceptance of the Islamic historical past, according to Baso, is also because of his unfamiliarity with the works of contemporary Muslims scholars, like Mohammed Arkoun, Ḥassan Ḥanafī, Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, and Naṣr Abū Zayd.[195] Al-Jābirī, for instance, as quoted by Baso, maintains that until the Prophet died (632), not all elements of the Muslim community at Medina were firmly integrated into a single, solid *ummah*. Besides the Migrants *(Muhājirūn*) and the Helpers (*Anṣār*) of the first Muslim generation, there were also the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), the Bedouin Arabs, and people newly converted to Islam from the conquered regions, as well as non-Muslim dwellers. Each of these groups was given a different social status by virtue of which it would be determined its allotment of the economic resources derived mainly from booty (*ghanīmah*). Moreover, there

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[193] Baso, "Islam Liberal sebagai Ideologi," p. 20.

[194] See *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, pp. 277-278.

[195] To a certain degree, these scholars can be characterized as poststructuralist Muslim thinkers, due, especially, to their "indebtedness" to European poststructuralist philosophers, like Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard. However, it is by no means true that Madjid did not know anything about their ideas. At the least Madjid was deeply aware of Arkoun and he admired him very much, though he did not explicitly reflect his admiration (and make reference to Arkoun's works) in his writings. In the early 1990s, when Madjid was a visiting professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, he expressed his intense interest in Arkoun's thinking and conclusions, and mentioned him repeatedly in his discussions with other teaching staff members of the Institute. (Personal e-mail communication with Prof. Federspiel, 10 October 2000). Prof. Federspiel was at the same time also a visiting professor at the Institute, and was in frequent touch with Madjid. Moreover, Madjid is also well versed in the idea of postmodernism, which has been a greatly attractive issue for young Muslim readers, like Baso. See, for instance, Madjid's article, "Pascamodernisme dan Dilema Islam Indonesia" (Postmodernism and the Dilemma of Indonesian Islam), in his *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan*, pp. 108-119.

were some famous tribes which committed apostasy and returned to their earlier faith (*murtad*). All of this happened, according to al-Jābirī, not because of their lack of fidelity to the state established by the Prophet, but, more predominantly—as might be inferred from the above statement—due to the inequality of economic distribution implemented by the Caliph. In general, there was economic as well as social injustice prevalent along with the ongoing process of establishing the new state by the Prophet and his successors. Such historical subtleties indicate that the Islamic historical past was not very much different from all other human histories, in which injustice, treachery and cruelty—besides, of course, moral uprightness—are very common.[196] Therefore, as noted previously, if one follows Baso's reasoning it would be hard to justify the Prophet's era as an ideal model to be imitated for establishing an egalitarian and just society in a modern setting.

However, it remains debatable as to what extent this so-called economic and social injustice was put into practice at the time of the Prophet and his early successors. At least, it must be kept in mind that since historical fact is always open to different interpretations, one should be open to the possibility of perceiving what really happened in the past from another perspective. It was ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644), the second Caliph, who first implemented a special policy with regard to different allotments of the economic distribution to the members of the community. These different allotments were determined by the people's particular social status, which was decided on the basis of their seniority in Islam (*al-sābiqah fi'l-Islām*), as well as of their participation in battles to defend Islam together with the Prophet. "Those who had fought at Badr [the first great battle against the Meccan people, 624] were higher in rank than those who had converted at the time of the conquest of Mecca [630]."[197] There-

[196] Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, p. 279n, quoting Muḥammed ʿĀbid al-Jābirī, *al-ʿAql al-Siyāsī al-ʿArabī: Muḥaddidāt wa-Tajalliyātuh* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsat al-Wiḥdat al-ʿArabīyah, 1992), pp. 129-131.

[197] Fu'ad Jabali, "A Study of the Companions of the Prophet: Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments." (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, 1999), p. 141. Jabali further notes that it was not only ʿUmar who implemented such a policy. The Prophet was reported to have also taken this measure in his treatment of his followers. Once Khālid b. al-Walīd, a Muslim hero who had converted to Islam only shortly before the conquest of Mecca, argued with ʿAmmār b. Yāsir. The latter, being one of the earlier converts, held a higher rank in Islam and was promised by the Prophet with Paradise in the hereafter. Knowing their disputation, the Prophet

fore, since ʿUmar's policy of economic distribution was based on the people's rank and role in defending Islam, he had maintained a proportionate distribution, which was indeed closer to the idea of justice. ʿUmar's policy as such was also applicable in his treatment of the Bedouins. He preferred the urban dwellers (*ahl al-ḥāḍirah*) to the Bedouins who were scattered nomadically throughout the desert. ʿUmar's policy was in fact reasonable since when he needed human power for defending the state against its enemy or to launch a battle campaign, it would be easier for him to rely on the urban dwellers rather than the Bedouins, simply because they were easier to locate and organize into a fighting force. If such a policy is to be seen as promoting a social inequality, one should also reconsider the "anthropological" factors inherent in the Bedouin life that underlay ʿUmar's preference. It is true that the policy implemented by ʿUmar caused a widening gap between the earlier and the later converts to Islam. It resulted not only in the later converts' degradation of their social status, but also caused the decline of their economic interests in the newly established community. Accordingly, the noble figures of the Quraysh who converted to Islam on the day of the conquest of Mecca (630) received stipends from the state treasury less than those who had converted earlier. ʿUmar, in protest over this inequality, simply responded that "the stipend was not decided on the basis of ancestral nobility but on seniority in Islam,"[198] since the earlier converts had suffered longer—and even sacrificed more—for the sake of Islam than the latter.

Another crucial point being criticized by Baso deals with an attempt to promote the idea of "civil society" in Indonesia. There has been a deep cleavage between the traditionalists and the Neo-Modernists with respect to the idea of civil society. While Madjid, being the representative of the Neo-Modernist group, promotes the term "*masyarakat madani*" to translate the term into Indonesian, the traditionalists insist on the use of "*masyarakat sipil*," or retain the

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was reported to have reminded Khālid not to argue with ʿAmmār in such a coarse way. "Compared to Khālid," the report further says, "'Ammār was one of the people of Paradise and was a combatant at Badr." See ibid., p. 140n, quoting Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Al-Istīʿāb fī Maʿrifat al-Aṣḥāb*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajawī (Beirut: Dār al-Jail, 1992), vol. 2, p. 430.

[198] Jabali, ibid., pp. 142-143. Quoting al-Ṭabarī's *Tā'rīkh al-Umam*, vol. 3, p. 109, Jabali reveals that the later converts were allotted stipends which amounted (only) to three thousand dirhams, compared to the five thousand that the combatants at Badr received.

English term *civil society* (in italics). But the most fundamental discrepancy between the two groups lies within the issue of how to locate Islam in the proper context of the discourse on civil society. For Madjid and his fellows, Islam should function as an alternative value system in applying the concept of civil society in Indonesia.[199] On the contrary, for the traditionalists, instead of being an alternative, Islam should be a mere complementary value system. The traditionalists are therefore critical of Madjid's insistence that Islam should be a dominant ideology in Indonesia.[200]

Based on the above consideration, Baso suggests that the Neo-Modernists have nothing to do with the idea of civil society, especially when they maintain the term "*masyarakat madani*" for its Indonesian word-substitute. Baso argues that the discourse developed by the Neo-Modernists does not deal properly with the "true" concept of civil society, especially when their reference is confined to the "idealized' historical past of Islam as noted previously. In addition, their ideas are more concerned with the "state discourse" (*wacana negara*), to reinforce the integration of Islam and the state, or, more precisely, the integration of "certain Muslim groups" into the state.[201] They did so because of, in Baso's opinion, a background which obliged them to see that the state and the politics cannot be separated from Islam. All of Madjid's ideas of politics and democracy are established on the basis of the way he perceives Islam as such.

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[199] Baso mentions a number of works by Madjid on civil society, which includes: "Memberdayakan Masyarakat, Menuju Negeri yang Adil, Terbuka dan Demokratis." An inaugural speech for the tenth anniversary of the Paramadina Foundation, 1 November 1996; "Menuju Masyarakat Madani," *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1996), pp. 51-55; "Kultur Politik Orde Baru: Prospek Demokratisasi, HAM, dan Posisi *Civil Society*," *Media Indonesia*, 12 October 1996; "Dinamika Budaya Pesisir dan Pedalaman: Menumbuhkan Masyarakat Madani," in Abdullah Hafidz et al (eds.), *HMI dan KAHMI: Menyongsong Perubahan, Menghadapi Pergantian Zaman* (Jakarta: Majelis Nasional KAHMI, 1997); and "Demokrasi dan Demokratisasi: *Civil Society* sebagai 'Rumah' Persemaian." *Jawa Pos*, 20-21 September 1996. See ibid., pp. 356-357 (Bibliography).

[200] See Muhammad A.S. Hikam, "Nahdlatul Ulama, *Civil Society* dan Proyek Pencerahan," an introductory remark to Baso's *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, p. 11. It must be kept in mind, however, that for the Neo-Modernists, Islam is not an ideology. In Madjid's point of view, to consider Islam as an ideology might imply that Islam is relative, since ideology is produced by human, and thus it is determined by time and space. Islam, on the contrary, is universal, and thus it transcends ideologies. See Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, p. 178, supra n. 117.

[201] Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, p. 284.

But, which "Islam" is applied by Madjid to construct his frame of discourse? In Baso's opinion, it must be that of "substansialist Islam" and "Islam of *al-ḥanīfiyat al-samḥah*" because of its notion of broad tolerance. For Baso, however, all of these ideas are only directed to justify that "from the beginning Islam has achieved a great success in political matters," "Islam is the religion of the ruling powers" or "the religion with an authority to govern," as well as that "the state and Islam are an inseparable entity." In this respect, Baso perceives Madjid's ideas of inclusive, tolerant and plural Islam as merely intended to posit Islam as a dominant value system in Indonesia. In other words, all of Madjid's ideas, according to Baso, are directed either to "governing" or to "giving direction" (*menguasai* and *mengarahkan*), which clearly allude to the notion of "the will to power" in the sense dictated by Nietzsche (1844-1900).[202]

Baso's criticism of Madjid's concept of "masyarakat madani" is also based on the latter's perception that the Prophetic era is not an ideal model to be used as a reference for establishing a just and egalitarian society, as discussed earlier. Therefore, in Baso's opinion, one cannot rely on this "idealized" era as a specimen for building a civil society in the contemporary period. This is because, Baso argues, the Prophet himself had introduced a pattern of social life with a class structure, through his statement that the leaders of the *ummah* should be of the Quraysh, "*al-a'immat min Quraysh*." The Quraysh, to which tribe the Prophet and other leading figures of the earliest Muslim community belonged, was the most powerful tribe and thus dominated all social, economic and political affairs of that classical period. Medina of the Prophetic era, after all, was not an ideal model for engendering an egalitarian civil society, because there had been a class in this society structure which held a superior status over the

[202] Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, p. 291; "Liberal Islam sebagai Ideologi," pp. 4, 12. The words *menguasai* and *mengarahkan* first appear in Madjid's *Nilai-nilai Dasar Perjuangan*, the so-called doctrinal guideline of the HMI, to describe the relationship between human and his natural environment (*alam sekelilingnya*). Madjid insists that humans have an authority to "govern" (*menguasai*) the natural world and their own community, in order to 'lead' (*mengarahkan*) them to a better condition of life. But man will not be able to apply his rule over them or to lead them without achieving the correct science of their laws. Yet, underlying all of these ideas, according to the critic, is a claim that Muslims are the best among the people, and were [divinely] ordained to give guidance and leadership to the whole world. The critic seems to be skeptical with this assessment, although Madjid establishes his ideas on the Qur'anic texts, such as 11:61, 33:72, 6:57 and 6:165. For further discussion on the idea of *menguasai* and *mengarahkan*, see *Nilai Identitas Kader*, p. 28.

others. This superior class of society even aspired to segregate those regarded as inferior, which was clearly a manifestation of hegemonic and tyrannical authority. Again, in Baso's point of view, the supporters of "masyarakat madani" are not aware of this critical fact, because they did not have an access to the classical Arabic literature, the primary reference to discuss what had really happened at the time of the Prophet and after. Baso further accuses them of having no sufficient language skill to discover this Islamic legacy, as they only rely on English works as their reference, but not on Arabic and French ones. Insofar as they did not understand Arabic and French, Baso suggests, they would never realize the necessity of self-criticism and of criticizing their past; everything they had found from the past would be simply a myth.[203] The allegation sounds reasonable, however, but a deeper study is of course needed for verification.

Baso has voiced strong criticism of Madjid's ideas, and called his entire mission into question. His enthusiastic argumentation and sharp criticism reflect his critical mind-set to "deconstruct" the views of groups outside the non-traditionalist camp.[204] This, to a certain extent, is also to reflect the concealed and ceaseless disputation of the traditionalists against the modernists. In defending their ideas,

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[203] Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, pp. 277-278.

[204] Deconstruction is a term invented by Jacques Derrida (1930-), a French philosopher, in the late 1960s. As an outstanding characteristic of postmodern philosophical ethos, this concept emphasizes on difference and on what fails to conform to the norm or to system-building. Therefore, deconstruction also functions as a criticism against structuralism, which maintains that "the world is intelligible insofar as we can discover some sort of order, or structure, or systematic patterning of things, or events or words, or indeed any phenomena." See, Stuart Sim (ed.), *The Icon Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought* (Cambridge, U.K.: Icon Books, 1999), p. 6; Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*, p. 89. When applied to the text, deconstruction is needed to "liberate the text, to deliberately develop its ambiguity, to uncover its suppressed ambiguity, to reveal its self-contradiction, and to identify the flaw, which is the condition of the possibility of every text." Binder, ibid., p. 92. Baso seems to have contentedly employed this approach in perceiving the achievements of the Neo-Modernist group, so that he might be able to offer his own thought as a new discourse to the "free market of ideas" among Indonesian readers. Thus, with the spirit of deconstructionism, he also rejects, for instance, Taufik Abdullah's "conventional" model of *histoire de mentalité*, that is, the history of ideas which influences human mode of actions, with its emphasis on the centrality of transcendence. See Baso, *Civil Society versus Masyarakat Madani*, pp. 40-41. For Taufik Abdullah's idea of *histoire de mentalité*, Baso refers to Abdullah's "Pemikiran Islam di Nusantara dalam Perspektif Sejarah." *Prisma*, vol. 20, no. 3 (March 1991), pp. 16-27; "Ke Arah Sejarah Pemikiran Islam di Asia Tenggara: Sebuah Pelancongan Bibliografis." *Sejarah*, no. 3 (1993), pp. 1-11; and "The Formation of A New Paradigm? A Sketch on Contemporary Islamic Discourse," in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward A New Paradigm*, pp. 47-88.

the traditionalists claimed to have gained the ability to make use of new weapons provided by contemporary scholars like Arkoun, al-Jābirī, Ḥanafī and Abū Zayd. It is through the works of these scholars—in addition to those of Western writers of the postmodernist school—that Baso bases his criticism of Madjid's renewal ideas.[205] Madjid was accused of aspiring to segregate (*menyingkirkan*) other groups who had refused to adopt his renewal ideas. He was merely perceived as being more concerned with "puritan Islam," although it was cloaked with the aphorism of "Islam yes, Islamic party no."[206]

Baso, after all, with his criticism does not give any consideration to the cultural background that caused Madjid and his movement to emerge. His criticism has been made only to examine Madjid's ideas in the current context, when Indonesian Muslims have considerable opportunity and recognition, and ignores the marginal role of Islam in the nation a few decades earlier. What Madjid accomplished was significant, building the importance of Islam to the nation on personal commitment of Muslims. In this sense it is the responsibility of every committed Muslim to defend his religion, especially at a time when his fellows were politically and culturally oppressed or deprived of their fundamental rights.[207] Madjid was able, through a strenuous

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[205] Currently, there is an apparent tendency for the young generation of the traditionalists to show their intellectual and cultural dynamism more expressively than the modernists. The group that is so far perceived as maintaining a "*kolot*" or "old-fashioned" mind-set now emerges more brilliantly, capable of adapting itself with the most recent intellectual direction. In spite of their background as the traditionalist Muslims with their *pesantren* milieu, young people associated with this group are well-versed with the ideas of Muslim "critical exegetes," such as Ḥassan Ḥanafī and ʿAbdullāhi Aḥmed al-Naʿīm, as well as with Western philosophical and political theories. Their emergence as such, which is of course in contrast to the dominant cultural climate of NU, was allegedly facilitated by Abdurrahmad Wahid's performance. During his tenure as the chairman of this association, he has made an enormous cultural breakthrough to accelerate the intellectual maturity among young NU members, to be able to compete with other groups. It was due to their "deviation" from the NU cultural mainstream that they are labeled "les *enfants terribles*." Yet, they also represent a "hybrid culture" that NU has to accommodate. See "Les Enfants Terribles dari NU." *Kompas Online*, 12 March 2000, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com/…/0003/12/seni/les06.htm [accessed 11 March 2000].

[206] Baso, "Liberal Islam sebagai Ideologi," p. 10.

[207] Baso actually admits this fact, as he states that during the early period of the New Order Muslims were bitterly ignored by the regime. The regime was very much in favor of the technocrats, the majority of whom came from ex-Socialist Party members, as well as from the military with their strong Javanese cultural background. Muslims suffered severely from the excessive role played by this "minority" group, which had hampered the chance of Muslims, as the "majority," to exercise their

effort, to place Islam to vastly improve the social and political position of Islam by giving it importance to the cultural setting of Indonesia. Therefore, when Madjid was perceived by the traditionalists as seriously exerting his idea that Islam should be a predominant value system in Indonesia, he was in fact, only defending the rights of his fellow Muslims to exercise their religious commitment in their home country, as was the duty and expectation of any Muslim citizen.[208] However, as a discourse analysis, Baso's criticism is important in assisting the advancement of Islam in Indonesia through new thinking and new participation. But it would also be unjust to ignore the cultural considerations by which Madjid and the Neo-Modernist group established their theological discourse.

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political and economic rights more proportionately. See, "Islam Liberal sebagai Ideologi," p. 4.

[208] For other critical considerations on the position of Madjid's renewal ideas among the contemporary discourse, see Eddy A. Effendi, "Meneruskan Kembali Gagasan Nurcholish Madjid," *Media Indonesia Online*, 24 March 2000, as quoted from http://www.mediaindo.co.id/detail_news.asp?id [accessed 23 March 2000]; Siti Nuryati, "Gagasan Cak Nur, Diteruskan atau Diluruskan? Tanggapan atas Eddy A. Effendi," *Media Indoensia Online*, 27 March 2000, as quoted from http://www.mediaindo.co.id/detail_news.asp?id [accessed 27 March 2000]; Hajriyanto Y. Thohari, "Cak Nur Jilid Satu, Amien Rais Jilid Dua." *Kompas Online*, 20 November 1998, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com…9811/20/opini/_cak04.htm. [Accessed 26 August 2000]; Sukidi, "Titik Temu Cak Nur—Amien Rais." *Kompas Online*, 19 October 1998, as quoted from http://www.kompas.com…9810/19/opini/titi4.htm. [Accessed 26 August 2000].

CONCLUSION

Muslim scholars have been very much concerned with maintaining the doctrinal purity of Islam both in belief and practice. This deep concern has been addressed in the works of classical theologians and heresiographers, such as al-Ashʿarī (d. 935), al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), and al-Shahrastānī (d. 1125). In general, their works are devoted to outlining the true beliefs and purity of faith in accordance with the teachings and directions of an absolute extrinsic authority, as well as to defend them against the corrupt views they regard as heretical. Their attempts as such can be conceived of as the defense of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, defined in this way, distinguishes between what is right and what is wrong, and gives direction and context to the Islamic tradition.

To designate which doctrine is considered right and orthodox, to some extent, means to support it as an official one. But Islam has no single organized religious institution with a mandate to formulate authoritatively the articles of belief of an official Islam. The works of the *ʿulamāʾ* in various fields of Islamic learning remain individual enterprises and do not receive any sanction to be universally followed by all Muslims. Moreover, in Islam it is the right of every individual Muslim to refer directly to the sources of doctrine in seeking his guidance in practicing religion, as well as to propagate his own vision of Islam. Therefore, there is only a very general standard by which Muslims are able to determine which doctrine is officially valid and accepted, i.e., the one that enjoys divine sanction. Such a doctrine should go back to revelation, since for Muslims revelation is the only reliable source and one that must always be faithfully transmitted. But, since individual understandings of revelation can vary greatly from time to time and from place to place, Muslims require an institution that is capable of bringing them to a common ground. This institution is known as *ijmāʿ*, meaning, the consensus of all the believers in general, and in particular those to whom the task of making decisions in juridical matters has been entrusted. Although it constitutes only the third principal source of Islamic religious doctrine after the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, in practice *ijmāʿ* holds an instrumental position in the formulation of dogma. Thus in theory, as the unanimous agreement of the *ummah*, *ijmāʿ* becomes a regulation (*ḥukm*) imposed

by God. *Ijmāʿ* also serves as a means to facilitate doctrinal unity within the *ummah* by reducing their causes of dissent (*ikhtilāf*).

Generally speaking, almost all Indonesian Muslims are Sunnites. Indeed, most practicing Muslims would claim affiliation to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, the prototype of religious attachment in Indonesian Islam. Attachment to the doctrines of this school is regarded as certain proof of valid adherence to orthodox Islam. The Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU), being representative of the traditionalist group, stated its attachment to this school explicitly in its constitution as explained further by many of its scholars in their writings. On the other hand, the Muhammadiyah, the group most representative of the modernist trend, has attested, although less explicitly, to its attachment to this school by stating that this movement should be based on the precepts of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah, another term used by al-Ashʿarī to designate the school.

In theory, any Muslim group is entitled to define the ideal characteristics of the Ahl al-Sunnah according to its own interpretation. The formula expressed by al-Baghdadī in his *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, however, has won general acceptance. According to his point of view, the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah are those who believe in the unity of God and hold the dogmas of promise and threat, reward and retribution. They tread the path of the Ṣifatīyah who approved the doctrine that God has eternal attributes, declare themselves to be free from anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and unwilling to divest God of His attributes (*taʿṭīl*), and, moreover, steer clear of the views of Qadarites and of Muʿtazilites. They affirm the possibility of seeing God with human eyes, but without falling into the error of anthropomorphism. They acknowledge bodily resurrection from the grave and recognize that the Pool (*al-khawḍ*), the Bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), the Intercession (*al-shafāʿah*) and the forgiveness of the sins—terms which have an eschatological reference—are all true. They acknowledge the imamates of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, and they venerate highly the pious ancestors of the *ummah*. They also recognize the obligation of extracting the precepts of law from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and the validity of consensus (*ijmāʿ*) among the Companions. They entrust themselves always to God, submitting to His command and feeling satisfied with whatever has been bestowed upon them; moreover, they abstain from rebelling against His will. Along with these doctrinal characteristics, al-Baghdādī includes to the school of the Ahl

al-Sunnah those among whom observance of the orthodox precepts prevails, and those who refrain from any innovation and heresy, following only doctrines approved by the orthodox dealing with justice and unity, reward and punishment.

The above exposition made by al-Baghdādī can be seen as representing the standard criterion of Islamic orthodoxy as upheld by the Sunnites, allowing the latter to designate those schools of thought that disagree with it as deviant or straying from the path of God. For Indonesian Muslims as well, this school has long been seen as the most perfect expression of Islam. For NU members in particular, attachment to the doctrines of the Ahl al-Sunnah forms a basic part of their religious identity. This is because NU was primarily established for the purpose of perpetuating and transmitting the Ahl al-Sunnah's doctrines among Indonesian Muslims. There was at the time great anxiety on the part of traditionalist leaders that the emergence of reform movements spearheaded by the Muhammadiyah in the early twentieth century would sever the traditional link with the Ahl al-Sunnah. With their claim to be the true defenders of the Ahl al-Sunnah, NU members defined Islam according to the school, although they continued to retain their own interpretation of this claim.

The NU's interpretation of the school of Ahl al-Sunnah is generally described by its writers as entailing the adherence to the *madhhab* system as the most legitimate way to understand, as well as to practice, the Islamic faith. In order to be able to embrace the religion of Islam correctly, it is argued, Muslims must follow their predecessors. For them, following the *madhhab* is the only correct way to fulfill this expectation, since religious knowledge can only be reliably transmitted by such means. In due course, it is necessary for Muslims to be cognizant of the schools of the past and not to deviate from their decisions, since otherwise they would destroy the consensus established by the *'ulamā'* on questions of religious matters. Accordingly, *taqlīd*, or the unquestioning acceptance or adoption of doctrines laid down by the leaders of a *madhhab* is legitimate. This is the essential interpretation of the traditionalists' attachment to the school of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Their understanding of what it means to be a devout, orthodox Muslims, is that of adhering inflexibly to the principles laid down by those leaders in the area of jurisprudence, by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in the field of theology, and by Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd and Abū Ḥāmid al-

Ghazālī in the domain of Sufism. They also maintain that certain popular religious practices, like *tahlilan, tawassul* and *slametan*, are divinely vindicated. For them, practicing these traditions is justified, and though vague in details, they nevertheless assume that such traditions must have been established on the basis of the practices of the Companions and approved by the Prophet.

Although the Muhammadiyah is generally perceived by the traditionalists as having only tenuous links to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah, in reality, it is on the contrary very deeply committed to Sunnism. In its doctrinal position, moreover, the Muhammadiyah also identifies with Ashʿarism. With its specific claim to belong to the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah, as explicitly stated in its book of *Tarjih*, the movement's theology is in fact perfectly congruent with that upheld by the Salaf, the first generation of the Muslim community. Compared to the NU, of course, the Muhammadiyah's attachment to the Ahl al-Sunnah is less clearly articulated. There are only a few works devoted to this issue that have been produced by its scholars. This is understandable, since for the Muhammadiyah, defending its attachment to the Ahl al-Sunnah is not a very high priority. Therefore, the Muhammadiyah's perception of its ties to the Ahl al-Sunnah is also different from that maintained by NU, especially since the latter interprets its Sunnī credentials solely in terms of its loyalty to the *madhhab*. For the Muhammadiyah, belonging to the Ahl al-Sunnah instead means following the traditions of the Prophet and his Companions, in the sense of following their principles of beliefs and practices, and of struggling for the glory of Islam and its *ummah*.

The Muhammadiyah defines itself as an Islamic movement which bases all of its religious and social activism as well as its worldview on the Book of God and the traditions of His Prophet. It also emulates the struggle of the Prophet in propagating Islam and promoting the well-being of the community, all of which are translated into real activities, such as engaging in religious propagation (*daʿwah*), or founding religious schools, hospitals, orphanages, and prayer houses. Therefore, since the Muhammadiyah refers all of its religious matters to God and His Prophet, it is evident that this reform movement belongs to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah as well. Even the renewal promoted by the Muhammadiyah is devoted to bringing back Indonesian Muslims to the ideal and universal concept of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Accordingly, the Muhammadiyah rejects the NU's claim

that the followers of Ahl al-Sunnah are those who associate themselves with the *madhhab*, or more specifically, are the followers of al-Shāfiʿī in practice and of al-Ashʿarī in belief. The reform movement promulgated by the Muhammadiyah is designed to restore the teachings of Islam to their purest and most original form, as prescribed in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, free from any element of heresy and superstition, as true reflections of the principal characteristics of Islam.

Despite the differences in their interpretation of what it means to be a follower of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah as well as in certain traditions and practices, both the Muhammadiyah and the NU remain outstanding representatives of Indonesian Islam. Moreover, since they both claim to follow only the religion of Allah, which is nothing other than His revelation, His doctrines, and His law or *sharīʿah*, they are equally representatives of orthodox Islam. Nevertheless, as exemplars of the modernist and traditionalist trends in the nation, both associations have been perceived as symbolizing the ongoing friction and disagreement that divide Indonesian Muslims. Yet, although this friction was very serious, in subsequent years people understood that in reality their disagreements did not go very deep. This strife never extended to the more fundamental principles, and never did it jeopardize their respective qualities as devout Muslims. Attempts have also frequently been made to reach mutual understanding and to bridge their differences.

However, the Muhammadiyah and the NU are only two among many other Muslim organizations in Indonesia, and there are still many Indonesian Muslims who are not officially affiliated with any Islamic organization, but yet remain devout Muslims. All of those who correctly observe their religious duties, cautiously maintain their purity of belief, and willfully avoid religious prohibitions are devout, orthodox Muslims, regardless of their connections with (or dissociation from) any social or religious organizations. Of course this does not necessarily imply that there is no difference in the quality of religious commitment between those who are actively involved in these organizations and those who are not.

The identification of these practitioners as orthodox Muslims has been characterized, especially in Java, by the term *santri*, which refers to mainstream religious adherence in Indonesian Islam. The opposite of *santri*, in terms of religious observance, is *abangan*, signifying those

who are nominally Muslims and have only little knowledge of their religion. They blend their beliefs with layers of indigenous animist and Hindu-Buddhist elements, and are sometimes blissfully ignorant of the fundamentals of the Islamic faith. The *santris*, on the other hand, do not hesitate to insist that they are true Muslims, whose commitment to Islam dominates every aspect of their lives. The contrast is also clear in the *santris'* commitment to strict ritual practices, their depth of religious comprehension, and their rejection of animist and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs and practices.

In Islam, the tendency toward dichotomous classification is very strong, as expressed in the distinction between Muslim non-Muslim, believer non-believer (or hypocrite), and the obedient negligent (or, more precisely, those who perform daily prayers obediently and those who neglect them, *tārik al-ṣalāh*). The Javanese, however, cannot accept so rigid a dichotomy at face value. Some Javanese Muslim leaders, aware of the ambiguous character of their followers, are more inclined to adopt a "continuous classification" rather than risk polarization. Thus they do not mean to juxtapose the *abangan* with the *santri*, but consider the former as *mu'allaf*, signifying those whose belief is not sufficiently strong. For the *santri*, therefore, the *abangan* are not unbelievers or *kāfirs*, but rather lukewarm Muslims who were not well exposed to their religion. On the other hand, the *abangan* persistently claim to be Muslims, though not "fanatic" Muslims. They are also aware, however, that to be ideal Muslims they have to adopt correct beliefs and perform the prescribed ritual obligations. It should also be noted that, underlying these ideas is the fact that being *abangan* is often considered to be a stage in the process of becoming *santri* or orthodox Muslims.[1]

With the emergence of the New Order in 1967 came the revived expectation that Muslims might be able to improve their social and political lives. Their expectations as such were raised by the abolition of their deadly enemy, the Communist Party, in the same year. However, although Muslims had given their full support to the emergence of the New Order, their hopes were eventually dashed. Muslim political aspirations were cut short by the main power brokers, who accused Muslims of plotting to establish an Islamic state.

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[1] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Santri – Abangan dalam Kehidupan Orang Jawa: Teropong dari Pesantren," in *Agama dan Tantangan Zaman: Pilihan Artikel Prisma* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), pp. 193-194.

This was the most powerful weapon of the secular-nationalist groups who joined with the nation's military forces to dominate the New Order leadership. For the regime, political Islam was a dangerous idea. Labeled as belonging to the "extreme right," political Islam was treated as "public enemy" number two, ranking just below the "extreme left" of the Communist ideology.[2] The struggle for a political Islam in the end constantly met with a series of obstacles and bore almost no fruit. The military has always attempted to circumscribe the influence of Islamic ideology promoted by Islamic parties, so that it would not penetrate the mass peasantry in rural areas.[3] But the most devastating issue was the state policy of obliging all political and mass organizations to replace their religious-ideological foundations with Pancasila as the only acceptable basis. Pious Muslims felt great anxiety over this imposition and saw this policy as an attempt to undermine their religion. This in turn led to the development among them of a "split-personality," as observers have put it, since they believed that Islam, as a religion transcending all human-made ideologies, ought to be placed above Pancasila, and yet in public were forced to acknowledge the superior status of Pancasila ideology.

But underlying all of these issues was a crucial theological problem that Muslims had first to resolve. Muslims were disappointed when the New Order government undertook modernization programs in the economic, political and cultural spheres of daily life during the 1970's and afterwards. Since the regime was dominated by the *abangan* of secular-nationalist groups, pious Muslims were not invited to participate in the process of outlining the early policy of the national development programs. Muslims were perceived as unprepared to participate in this policy-making, or, indeed, suspected of only wanting to maintain their exclusive ideological interests.[4] Recognizing this dilemma, some Muslim scholars tried to find solutions by reviewing the most essential elements in their belief system, which amounted in fact to a reconsideration of their theological worldview. They considered the Muslims' un-preparedness to accept modernization to have originated from a theological misunderstand-

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[2] R. William Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no. 3 (August 1996), p. 615.

[3] M. Rusli Karim, *Negara dan Peminggiran Islam Politik: Suatu Kajian Mengenai Implikasi Kebijakan Pembangunan bagiKeberadaan "Islam Politik" di Indonesia Era 1970-an dan 1980-an* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1999), p. 152.

[4] Ibid., pp. 182-183.

ing. Nevertheless, although some earlier scholars like A. Hassan of the Persatuan Islam, Hamka, H.A. Malik Ahmad and Hadikusuma of the Muhammadiyah came to reconsider the necessity of adopting "rational" theology—instead of a fatalistic belief and worldview—it was only through the works of Harun Nasution that the notion of "rational" theology became widely familiar to Indonesian Muslims.

Nasution's best-known concept in this respect was that, if Muslims aspired to achieve progress, they had to replace their allegiance to traditional-Ashʿarism with a theology that emphasizes a high degree of rationality; he chose Muʿtazilism, an outlook from the tenth century. For Nasution, Ashʿarite theology, which had dominated the Muslim world for centuries, was responsible for much of the backwardness and lethargy Muslims experienced, primarily due to its fatalistic tendency. Therefore, in spite of some criticism directed at him by other scholars, Nasution was persistent in promoting rational theology as the essential requirement for Muslims to achieve progress in the modern world. His insistence on promoting Muʿtazilism through the IAIN—a policy that was criticized as being too much inclined to elitism, was defended by him as necessary for the long-term survival of Islam in Indonesia. It was only the elite, he argued, who could really improve the self-image of Islam, mainly through their political decisions. However, their political decisions would not be in favor of Muslims unless they sincerely embraced Islam. Therefore, Islam had not only to become the religion of the urban and rural masses, but also the religion of the elite. By Islamizing the elite, Islam, in addition to improving its self-image, would also spread in a multidimensional manner. The elite, however, would accept Islam more enthusiastically only if Islam was presented in a sophisticated way with its rational theological contents, compatible with ideas of modernity and progress. The Islamic higher education curriculum promoted by the IAIN is to a certain degree directed to meet this demand.

Echoing Nasution's enthusiasm, the Jakarta-based scholar Nurcholish Madjid came forward in the 1980s with his proposal on how to improve Islam's position within the Indonesian cultural context. His movement, known as Islamic Neo-Modernism, has contributed greatly to the improvement of Muslims' understanding of modernity *vis-à-vis* sincere religious commitment. Madjid has shed a new light on the emergence of a fresh Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. Since the Islamic political parties appeared to be unsatisfactory chan-

nels for realizing Muslims' aspirations, another means had to be found without delay. Madjid attempted through his movement to reformulate in general terms the fundamental Islamic postulates regarding God, man and the world, and the manner of their relationships in the light of new political realities. Therefore, his renewal movement was a more refined elaboration of fundamental Islamic conceptions and remained consonant with contemporary efforts toward Indonesian social and political modernization.

But for Madjid, the most essential task for Indonesian Muslims today is, in order to be able to implement Islamic teachings properly, that they should achieve a correct understanding of their religious doctrines, and have a good comprehension of the environment in which they apply their religion, that is, Indonesia. Madjid has clearly formulated this idea in his concept of "cultural Islam," an Islam whose primary role in the life of the nation is to serve as a source of ethical and cultural guidance. In championing this cultural Islam, Madjid also means to resolve the inner tension experienced by Muslims in dealing with state accelerated development programs. Thus he and his supporters have agreed to share in the aspirations of other elements in the nation, including the military, technocrats and intellectuals, in order to achieve a politically stable and modernized Indonesia. Embracing this attitude and perspective, Madjid has taken initiatives that promote the idea of pluralism in society. He insists that, as the main constituent citizens of the country, Muslims should actively participate in the process of social transformation, by virtue of which religious aspirations would find new means of reinvigoration. Muslims should also involve themselves in the process of modernization, in which scientific and empirical approaches may be applied to reinterpret the universal message of Islam, to the increased benefit of Muslims with respect to their social and cultural life.

Although circumscribed by unfavorable political conditions during the New Order era (1966-1998), a tendency toward a more orthodox Islam or *santri* culture has been gathering momentum, and has won the support of many elements in the nation, including the main holders of power. This support was, however, confined to the promotion of certain devotional matters or personal piety. This is particularly due to the fact that the New Order regime adopted a two-pronged Islamic policy: promotion of personal piety and opposition to political Islam. Religious observance was strongly encouraged, not only for Muslims but also for the followers of the other recognized religions:

Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Initially it might be taken to be a sign of one's anticommunist identification, a necessary pretext to confirm one's lack of affiliation with the Communist party. Atheism, as an inseparable component of Communist ideology, was declared anti-Pancasila and outlawed. Students at all levels of education, both public and private, were required to take courses in religious instruction. The Department of Religious Affairs was strengthened and given a new non-partisan leadership by appointing those not involved in the ideological conflicts of the previous era (more precisely between the Masyumi and NU). The IAIN's role as an instrumental higher education institution for Islamic teachers' training was expanded and granted additional funding. A private foundation presided over by Suharto himself began a massive program of subsidizing mosque building throughout the country.[5]

On the one hand, Muslims actually benefited very much from the cultural improvements brought by the New Order, especially in the field of education. During the first years of the era, when the government's preferential treatment of Chinese and secular-nationalist groups denied Muslims the chance to develop their political and economic institutions, education constituted the only viable means of improving their lot. Thanks to the efforts made by the New Order government to improve the national education system (though much criticism was frequently directed at this policy), education became more easily accessible to the majority of the population. More people were able to send their children to pursue higher levels of education, enabling many to elevate themselves to the rank of the "new middle-class community." This phenomenon became known as *embourgeoisement*, and was considered one of the most significant achievements of the modern Islamic movement in Indonesia. Those who belong to this new, educated Muslim generation are generally characterized as having a modern mindset, and in many cases they hold important positions in modern institutions as well as adopt a middle-class culture. All of these have contributed greatly to the emergence of the so-called "intellectual boom" of Muslims who possess a high level of technical know-how.[6]

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[5] Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia," p. 623.

[6] M. Syafi'i Anwar, "Islam, Negara dan Formasi Sosial dalam Orde Baru: Menguak Dimensi Sosio-historis Kelahiran dan Perkembangan ICMI." *Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1992), *Supplement*, p. 13. See also, Aswab Mahasin, "The Santri Middle Class: An Insider's View," in Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young (eds.), *The Politics of*

The intellectual boom, on the other hand, has also permitted both the horizontal and vertical advancement of pious Muslims or *santris*. Horizontal mobility was marked by the spread of Muslim professionals in a broader range of enterprises, while vertical mobility was marked by an improvement in the status of the overall Muslim social class. In addition, besides benefiting from the technical and managerial skills they had acquired, as pious Muslims they persistently maintained their religious commitment. The emergence of this new class of Muslims signified the corresponding emergence of an Islamic urban phenomenon, represented by *santris* earning high wages who remained pious and devoted. These latter manifested their religious commitment by practicing their daily ritual obligations in their offices or working areas, thereby raising their profile and acquiring a reputation as "inner players." After about two decades, their role as inner players has brought about the vertical mobility of the process of Islamization. In the 1980s this phenomenon was known as the "Islamization of the bureaucracy," which further influenced the blurring of the *santri – abangan* dichotomy formulated by Geertz several decades earlier.[7] Now, an individual practicing Islam in a devout manner is not necessarily to be suspected of advocating "fanatic Islam." It has simply become an acceptable expression of being a true Muslim.

After all, the *santri* cultural domain has expanded gradually and found a wider acceptance in congruence with the increased consciousness on the part of Muslims of the necessity of maintaining an inclusive theological perspective and pluralism. There are some factors that can be highlighted as supporting this *santri* cultural expansion, or the growth of orthodoxy in Indonesian Islam:

1. *The internal efforts of Muslim theologians to provide clearer expositions of doctrinal matters*. The first attempts were made by reformists who tried to outline the more genuine doctrinal beliefs of Islam, free from elements of heresy and superstition. The use of the vernacular in promoting this true belief of Islam, instead of relying on the Arabic language which only a limited number of people were able to understand, has opened Islamic teachings to a wider audience.[8] Once

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Middle Class Indonesia (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), pp. 139-144.

[7] Anwar, ibid., citing Lance Castle, "Pasang Surut Usahawan Santri: Gaji Tinggi, Alim dan Taat." *Jawa Pos*, 18 March 1991.

[8] Howard M. Federspiel, "Modernist Islam in Southeast Asia (1900-1950)." Unpublished paper, 1999, p. 8.

this foundation was solidly established, Harun Nasution emerged to provide it with a more developed and systematic theological component. Nasution's endeavor found great success, especially due to the institutional support provided by the IAIN in disseminating his ideas. The advent of Nurcholish Madjid completed this progress. He not only improved the substantial theological basis that Nasution had established, but went even further by broadening that basis and by showing how to place this more refined theology in an agreeable cultural context in the ongoing process of democratization.

2. *Certain political decisions that unintentionally made a wider spread of orthodoxy*. During the New Order era, the government applied the policy of the "floating mass," by virtue of which political parties were not allowed to organize their activities at the village level. People were supposed thereby to be de-politicized, and it was expected that they support the development programs designed by the state. They were only allowed to participate in political activities during the general elections, once in every five years. For Muslims, however, this policy contributed greatly to reducing the ideological conflicts caused by their different primordial affinities. By the same token, the state's insistence that all political and social organizations be based solely on the state ideology, Pancasila, also contributed to building a more cohesive Islamic society. There was no longer an Islamic party which could claim that its ideology was the only legitimate representative of Indonesian Islam—a claim that once had aroused considerable conflict and caused more fragmentation among Muslims. Those who used to besmirch the ritual practices of other groups, due to their different ideological worldview, now came together to the same mosques, schools, and participated in the same religious festivals or *pengajian*. More notably, there was now no longer a political threat inherent in identifying oneself as a true Muslim.

3. *Improvement of religious education*. In addition to the above mentioned improvements in general education that benefited all Muslims and allowed them to elevate their social status, religious education has also made significant contributions. Students at all levels of education are required to take courses in religious subjects. *Santris*, or more knowledgeable pious Muslims, were required to provide religious instruction, not only in centers of traditional Islamic education, such as *madrasahs* or *pesantrens*, but also at all levels of "secular" educational institutions administered by the Department of National Education. Public universities also grew more concerned with the need

for accommodating their students' interests in acquiring a deeper knowledge of religious doctrine. Considerable funds were raised to build new prayer houses in each school or university, as well as to finance religious festivals or seminars in these educational units. It is not surprising, therefore, that many religious leaders or scholars and preachers then emerged from these "secular" universities, such as M. Amien Rais, Jalaluddin Rahmat, Imaduddin Abdurrahim, and Ahmad Syafii Maarif, to mention just a few examples.

4. *The intensification of Islamic revitalization or da'wah.* Outside the formal religious education mentioned above, the demand to obtain a better understanding of Islam has also been met through the *da'wah*, or Islamic revitalization. Despite its "informal" character and the fact that no standard "curriculum" or grade structure is in place, *da'wah* activities have a very direct influence on the improvement of daily religious life. Due to its informal character, the activities of the *da'wah* can be pursued in a more flexible circumstances, in any available place. Thus, the *da'wah* has the ability to attract a large audience, due in part to the capability and the eloquence of the preachers. It is likely due to the increase in *da'wah* activities that traces of animism and superstition have been so significantly reduced. Eldar Braten, for instance, points out in his re-examination of *slametan* tradition that this tradition has transformed itself into more orthodox forms of practice. Muslim leaders, through their *da'wah* activities, have successfully cleansed from the *slametan* the ritual of offerings and the use of incense which suggested veneration of spirits. More significantly, the *slametan* has increasingly adopted *tahlilan* (the recitation of *lā ilāha illa Allāh*, a part of Muslims' confessional faith) as its main ritual formula. Therefore, apart from the color symbolism of the ritual food, there are no obvious traces of animism left, which signifies that in the midst of the process of change, the *slametan* has become overtly Islamic. Likewise, many spells that people draw on for protection when passing auspicious stones and trees have been replaced by Qur'ānic verses (*āyāt*) pronounced in Arabic. Another symbolic transformation is also visible in the practice of visiting graveyards. Previously, people would spread flower petals on the grave as an offering to deceased persons. Now it has been transformed into a tradition of simply expressing love or beauty, while many have even ceased the practice altogether. Similarly, whereas previously visits to graveyards might have been intended to obtain certain blessings from the deceased, now, with the deeper understanding of Islamic

precepts, it is meant to remind oneself about one's destiny in life, and to pray to God for forgiveness of the deceased. In other words, the religious orientation of practitioners has been redirected to God alone rather than to individual ancestors. Still more fundamentally, the name of Allah is continually voiced in daily life, either through the mosque loudspeakers, in public *pengajian*, by children learning to recite the Holy Scripture, in *slametans* or in prayer houses.[9]

As an examination of the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia, this study has surveyed some attempts made by modernist thinkers to formulate their theological thought throughout the twentieth century. In general, these attempts illustrate an integral continuum of progress, beginning with the very simple elaboration of Muslim principal beliefs found in the *Kitāb al-Īmān* of the Muhammadiyah's Himpunan Putusan Tarjih, and extending to the more recent and sophisticated expositions presented by Harun Nasution and Nurcholish Madjid. It is noteworthy, however, that although the traditionalists at first reacted strongly against the modernist attempts to introduce more "purified" belief and practice, in due course, they approved of them. They even became deeply attentive—following their modernist counterparts—of the necessity of bringing their members closer to a more orthodox version of Islam, through an accommodative and persuasive approach. Yet, it is unlikely true that this orthodox Islam can be thoroughly put into practice without a reconsideration of the actual condition of Indonesian culture. Though doctrinal Islam has been universally defined in the works of Muslim theologians as well as jurists, in practical terms it has to take into account the cultural and social settings of the ummah. In other words, "purified" and orthodox belief is not enough. It should be "brought down to earth," in response to the real cultural and social necessities of the population, without sacrificing its doctrinal integrity. The promotion of this type of Islam, better known as "cultural Islam," is currently the chief concern of those associated with the Neo-Modernist group. Indonesian Islam, after all, has grown more orthodox, but not necessarily to the extent of being dislodged from its Indonesian cultural footing. Indeed it is with this sense of orthodoxy that Indonesian Muslims—borrowing Akbar S. Ahmed's expression—"are

[9] Eldar Braten, "To Colour, Not Oppose: Spreading Islam in Rural Java," in Leif Manger (ed.), *Muslim Diversity: Local Islam in Global Contexts* (Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 1999), pp. 165-170.

entering an even more self-consciously Islamic phase than in the recent past." Islam has been auspiciously promoted in an amiable image, as it "is not really about bombs and book-burning."[10]

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[10] Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35-36.

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Mr. Hud Abdullah Musa, an Ustādh at the Pesantren Persatuan Islam, Bangil, 25 February 2000, at Bangil, East Java.

Dr. Muslim Nasution, Lecturer of Graduate Studies, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 3 March 1999, at Jakarta.

Mr. Oman Fatchurrachman, Secretary of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah's Majlis Tarjih, Yogyakarta, 9 February 1999, at Yogyakarta.

Dr. Syafiq A. Mughni, Visiting Professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 3 and 15 September 1999, at Montreal.

Mr. Syamsul Anwar, vice chairman of the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah's Majlis Tarjih, Yogyakarta, 9 February 1999, at Yogyakarta.

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Halaqoh Kajian Islam
KAJIAN TAFSIR
"Al-Qur'an Sebagai Panduan Hidup Berkemajuan"
Bersama :
Prof. H. Fauzan Saleh, Ph.D
Kamis, 19 Mei 2022
19 Syawal 1443 Hijriah
Pkl. 19.00 (Ba'da Isya) - Selesai
Masjid Mustajab
Kelurahan Jamsaren - Kota Kediri
LIVE
Youtube :
Majelis Tabligh Muhammadiyah Kediri

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI

SYEKH WASIL

KEDIRI

Generally speaking, almost all Indonesian Muslims are Sunnites. Indeed, most practicing Muslims would claim affiliation to the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, the prototype of religious attachment in Indonesian Islam. Attachment to the doctrines of this school is regarded as certain proof of valid adherence to orthodox Islam. The Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU), being representative of the traditionalist group, stated its attachment to this school explicitly in its constitution as explained further by many of its scholars in their writings. On the other hand, the Muhammadiyah, the group most representative of the modernist trend, has attested, although less explicitly, to its attachment to this school by stating that this movement should be based on the precepts of the Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Sunnah, another term used by al-Ashʿarī to designate the school.

In theory, any Muslim group is entitled to define the ideal characteristics of the Ahl al-Sunnah according to its own interpretation. The formula expressed by al-Baghdadī in his *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, however, has won general acceptance. According to his point of view, the followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah are those who believe in the unity of God and hold the dogmas of promise and threat, reward and retribution. They tread the path of the Ṣifatīyah who approved the doctrine that God has eternal attributes, declare themselves to be free from anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and unwilling to divest God of His attributes (*taʿṭīl*), and, moreover, steer clear of the views of Qadarites and of Muʿtazilites. They affirm the possibility of seeing God with human eyes, but without falling into the error of anthropomorphism. They acknowledge bodily resurrection from the grave and recognize that the Pool (*al-khawḍ*), the Bridge (*al-ṣirāṭ*), the Intercession (*al-shafāʿah*) and the forgiveness of the sins—terms which have an eschatological reference—are all true. They acknowledge the imamates of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, and they venerate highly the pious ancestors of the *ummah*. They also recognize the obligation of extracting the precepts of law from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and the validity of consensus (*ijmāʿ*) among the Companions. They entrust themselves always to God, submitting to His command and feeling satisfied with whatever has been bestowed upon them; moreover, they abstain from rebelling against His will.